



Washington State Fusion Center INFOCUS



TUESDAY — 6 SEP 2022

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Events, Opportunities

HEADLINE	09/06 Russia privately warns economic damage
SOURCE	https://finance.yahoo.com/news/russia-risks-bigger-longer-sanctions-135601014.html
GIST	<p>(Bloomberg) -- Russia may face a longer and deeper recession as the impact of US and European sanctions spreads, handicapping sectors that the country has relied on for years to power its economy, according to an internal report prepared for the government.</p> <p>The document, the result of months of work by officials and experts trying to assess the true impact of Russia's economic isolation due to President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine, paints a far more dire picture than officials usually do in their upbeat public pronouncements. Bloomberg viewed a copy of the report, drafted for a closed-door meeting of top officials on Aug. 30. People familiar with the deliberations confirmed its authenticity.</p> <p>Two of the three scenarios in the report show the contraction accelerating next year, with the economy returning to the prewar level only at the end of the decade or later. The "inertial" one sees the economy bottoming out next year 8.3% below the 2021 level, while the "stress" scenario puts the low in 2024 at 11.9% under last year's level.</p> <p>All the scenarios see the pressure of sanctions intensifying, with more countries likely to join them. Europe's sharp turn away from Russian oil and gas may also hit the Kremlin's ability to supply its own market, the report said.</p> <p>Beyond the restrictions themselves, which cover about a quarter of imports and exports, the report details how Russia now faces a "blockade" that "has affected practically all forms of transport," further cutting off the country's economy. Technological and financial curbs add to the pressure. The report estimates as many as 200,000 IT specialists may leave the country by 2025, the first official forecast of the widening brain drain.</p> <p>Publicly, officials say the hit from sanctions has been less than feared, with the contraction possibly less than 3% this year and even less in 2023. Outside economists have also adjusted the outlooks for this year, backing off initial forecasts of a deep recession as the economy has held up better than expected.</p> <p>Export Drop The document calls for a raft of measures to support the economy and further ease the impact of the restrictions in order to get the economy recovering to pre-war levels in 2024 and growing steadily after that. But the steps include many of the same measures to stimulate investment that the government has touted over the last decade, when growth largely stagnated even without sanctions.</p> <p>Asked about the Bloomberg report early Tuesday in Vladivostok, Economy Minister Maxim Reshetnikov called the forecasts "analytical estimates that we used to calculate what would happen if we don't resist, don't do anything," according to Tass.</p> <p>What Bloomberg Economics Says... "With diminished access to Western technologies, a wave of foreign corporate divestment and demographic headwinds ahead, the country's potential growth is set to shrink to 0.5%-1.0% in the next decade. Thereafter, it will shrink further still, down to just above zero by 2050. Russia will also be increasingly vulnerable to a decline in global commodity prices, as international reserves no longer provide a buffer." -Alexander Isakov, Russia economist</p> <p>Over the next year or two, the report warns of "reduced production volumes in a range of export-oriented sectors," from oil and gas to metals, chemicals and wood products. While some rebound is possible later, "these sectors will cease to be the drivers of the economy."</p> <p>A full cutoff of gas to Europe, Russia's main export market, could cost as much as 400 billion rubles (\$6.6 billion) a year in lost tax revenues, according to the report. It won't be possible to fully compensate the lost sales with new export markets even in the medium term.</p>

Oil Sector Hit

As a result, output will have to be reduced, threatening Kremlin goals for expanding domestic gas supplies, the report said. The lack of technology needed for liquefied natural gas plants is “critical” and may hamper efforts to build new ones.

Europe’s plans to stop importing Russian oil products -- about 55% of exports went there last year -- could trigger sharp cuts in production leaving the domestic market short of fuel, as well.

Metals producers are losing \$5.7 billion a year from the restrictions, the report said.

If the world economy slips into recession, the report warns, Russia could see exports cut further as it becomes the “swing supplier” on global markets, with demand for its products disappearing first. That could trigger a plunge in the ruble and a spike in inflation.

On the import side, “the main short-term risk is the suspension of production due to lack of imported raw materials and components.” Over the longer term, the inability to repair imported equipment could permanently limit growth, the report said.

‘Critical Imports’

“There are simply no alternative suppliers for some critical imports,” it said.

Even in the farm sector, where the Kremlin has touted its efforts at replacing foreign supplies, dependence on key inputs could force Russians to reduce their food consumption as supplies dwindle, according to the report.

Restrictions on access to western technology may push Russia a generation or two behind current standards as it’s forced to rely on less advanced alternatives from China and Southeast Asia.

The report warns that sanctions will also force the government to revise a range of the development targets that Putin had set before the war, including those for boosting population growth and life expectancy.

On a sectoral basis, the report details the breadth of the hit from sanctions:

- Agriculture: Fully 99% of poultry production and 30% of Holstein dairy cattle output depends on imports. Seeds for staples like sugar beets and potatoes are also mostly brought in from outside the country, as are fish feeds and aminoacids.
- Aviation: 95% of passenger volume is carried on foreign-made planes and the lack of access to imported spare parts could lead the fleet to shrink as they go out of service
- Machine-building: only 30% of machine tools are Russian-made and local industry doesn’t have the capacity to cover rising demand
- Pharmaceuticals: About 80% of domestic production relies on imported raw materials
- Transport: EU restrictions have tripled costs for road shipments
- Communications and IT: Restrictions on SIM cards could leave Russia short of them by 2025, while its telecommunications sector may fall five years behind world leaders in 2022.

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HEADLINE	09/05 Putin new foreign policy: ‘Russian World’
SOURCE	https://www.reuters.com/world/putin-approves-new-foreign-policy-doctrine-based-russian-world-2022-09-05/
GIST	<p>LONDON, Sept 5 (Reuters) - President Vladimir Putin on Monday approved a new foreign policy doctrine based around the concept of a "Russian World", a notion that conservative ideologues have used to justify intervention abroad in support of Russian-speakers.</p> <p>The 31-page "humanitarian policy", published more than six months into the war in Ukraine, says Russia should "protect, safeguard and advance the traditions and ideals of the Russian World".</p>

	<p>While presented as a kind of soft power strategy, it enshrines in official policy ideas around Russian politics and religion that some hardliners have used to justify Moscow's occupation of parts of Ukraine and support for breakaway pro-Russian entities in the east of the country.</p> <p>"The Russian Federation provides support to its compatriots living abroad in the fulfilment of their rights, to ensure the protection of their interests and the preservation of their Russian cultural identity," the policy said.</p> <p>It said that Russia's ties with its compatriots abroad allowed it to "strengthen on the international stage its image as a democratic country striving for the creating of a multi-polar world."</p> <p>Putin has for years been highlighting what he sees as the tragic fate of some 25 million ethnic Russians who found themselves living outside Russia in newly independent states when the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, an event he has called a geopolitical catastrophe.</p> <p>Russia has continued to regard the former Soviet space, from the Baltics to Central Asia, as its legitimate sphere of influence - a notion fiercely resisted by many of those countries as well as by the West.</p> <p>The new policy says Russia should increase cooperation with Slavic nations, China, and India, and further strengthen its ties to the Middle East, Latin America and Africa.</p> <p>It said Moscow should further deepen its ties with Abkhazia and Ossetia, two Georgian regions recognised as independent by Moscow after its war against Georgia in 2008, as well as the two breakaway entities in eastern Ukraine, the self-styled Donetsk People's Republic and the Luhansk People's Republic.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/05 Seattle tourist boom, Tacoma not so much
SOURCE	https://www.thenewstribune.com/news/local/article265225941.html
GIST	<p>The ripple effects of the COVID-19 pandemic continue to be felt in Tacoma and Pierce County's tourism recovery.</p> <p>By comparison, Seattle has made a stronger showing with downtown visitors and hotel occupancy.</p> <p>Downtown Seattle Association's August recovery report said, "Downtown welcomed more than 2.9 million visitors in July — the highest monthly visitor total since the start of the pandemic."</p> <p>Hotel demand also was on the comeback as the association said, "Demand for hotel rooms downtown remained strong in July, reaching 94 percent of 2019 levels." It hit 96 percent in June.</p> <p>In Tacoma, tourism data presented Tuesday, Aug. 30, to the City Council's Economic Development Committee showed that growth in terms of visitors remained off from pre-pandemic levels, though visitor numbers from surrounding towns were on the rise.</p> <p>Dean Burke, president and CEO of Travel Tacoma — Mt. Rainier Tourism and Sports, told committee members to remember that even though amounts charged for rooms were on the rise, "inflation is not recovery."</p> <p>While the percentage of visitors traveling from up to 500 miles away is up from 2019, those coming from 500-1,000 miles away are down 23.83 percent and those from 1,000 or more miles away are down more than 30 percent.</p> <p>Unique visitors to Tacoma from January through May were down 21.5 percent this year compared with 2019, and hotel occupancy was down 16.6 percent over the same period for downtown.</p>

Downtown Tacoma has seen 65,543 unique visitors to date this year, though that number is routinely updated amid data lags.

In Pierce County, hotel occupancy January through May was down 8.5 percent from 2019.

In downtown Tacoma, average daily room rates in 2019 were \$152.68 and dropped as low as \$87.65 in 2020. So far this year, the average rate is at \$156.57. For Pierce County, average daily room rates in 2019 were at \$106.31, and year to date the rate is at \$116.90.

During the pandemic, “downtowns anywhere suffered disproportionately in relation to the rest of the U.S.,” Burke said.

For downtown now, he noted, “We still have some rooms offline, still having staffing shortages, still having downtown issues,” with the concentration of people still “just not quite as sharp.”

For the county, he predicted hotel occupancy could reach 71 percent by year’s end, sitting at 69.1 percent now.

“We’re catching up,” he noted, with 2019’s countywide percentage of occupancy at more than 75 percent.

The return of conventions and the growth of sporting events were both predicted to help boost Tacoma’s turnaround. Burke noted that while meetings and conventions sector “across the country is absolutely taking the longest to recover from the pandemic, I would also say at the moment, it’s the fastest (coming back) against what the forecast was.

“We are aiming to create 105,000 new room nights next year that we will create and sell directly out of our office,” he said. Of those, “45,000 of those room nights will be in sports events, 40,000 will be leisure travelers and the balance on that 20,000 will be meetings and conventions. We will touch approximately 400 events in the next calendar year and about a million travelers directly.”

He also noted that while other markets have one strong main attraction, Tacoma reaped the benefits of Mount Rainier, downtown museums and more.

Mount Rainier in 2021 for the first time in history saw more than a million vehicles, National Park Service visitation records show, and more than 2.4 million visitors, up from more than 2.2 million in 2019.

“When people come here, they actually do a lot more things than they would do in most other markets,” Burke told the council members. “So if they’re going to Vegas or to Disney or Dallas, their experience is much narrower, much more concentrated. And here they will do so many different things and have a more balanced experience as well.”

SEA-TAC BY THE NUMBERS

Another regional entity also is lagging in recovery.

Seattle-Tacoma International Airport predicted in an Aug. 26 online travel update that Labor Day weekend would bring about 10 percent more travelers compared with last year. It noted that was still “10 percent less than pre-pandemic levels.”

European travel has recovered to pre-pandemic levels, the airport said, while “Mexico/Central America services grew 263 percent in July versus 2019.”

Friday, Sept. 2, was predicted to be the busiest travel day, according to Sea-Tac, “with a forecasted 155,000 passengers traveling through the airport (departing, arriving, and connecting).” The second-most busy was set to be Thursday, Sept. 1.

	<p>Monday, Sept. 5, was predicted to be the third-busiest day of the holiday weekend, with a projected 146,000 travelers coming through.</p> <p>“Pre-pandemic passenger numbers reached as high as 185,000 per day during Labor Day weekend in 2019,” the airport noted.</p> <p>Sea-Tac projected that 2022 will close out about 10 percent below 2019’s level, and next year is projected to be off 3 percent from pre-pandemic times. The airport said it anticipates returning to pre-pandemic traffic levels in 2024.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/05 Floatplane crash, search halted; 9 missing
SOURCE	https://www.seattlepi.com/news/article/1-dead-9-missing-after-floatplane-crashes-in-17419990.php
GIST	<p>WHIDBEY ISLAND, Wash. (AP) — The U.S. Coast Guard suspended the search Monday afternoon for nine people, including a child, who were missing after a floatplane crashed in the waters of Puget Sound northwest of Seattle.</p> <p>The body of a 10th person, an unidentified female, was recovered by a good Samaritan on Sunday after the crash was reported at 3:11 p.m., Scott Giard, director of the U.S. Coast Guard's search and rescue for the Pacific Northwest, said at a news conference.</p> <p>Just after noon on Monday, the Coast Guard said it was suspending the search for survivors after “saturating an area” of more than 2,100 square nautical miles (nearly 2,800 square miles or 7,250 square kilometers).</p> <p>“All next of kin have been notified of this decision,” the Coast Guard said on Twitter. “Our hearts go out to the families, loved ones and friends of those who remain missing and the deceased.”</p> <p>The Northwest Seaplanes flight left Friday Harbor, a popular tourist destination in the San Juan Islands, and was headed to Renton Municipal Airport, the company's base, said Coast Guard spokesperson William Colclough.</p> <p>The plane went down in Mutiny Bay off Whidbey Island, roughly 30 miles (50 kilometers) northwest of downtown Seattle and about halfway between Friday Harbor and Renton, a suburb south of Seattle.</p> <p>The Coast Guard learned through the seaplane company's owner that two Friday Harbor seaplanes took off Sunday afternoon and the owner was aboard one of the flights, Giard said. The owner told authorities he saw the other plane divert slightly off course and he tried to make radio contact but was unable to.</p> <p>“Shortly after that, he noticed on his flight tracker that the flight had stopped tracking and notified authorities,” Giard said.</p> <p>Officials received reports that “the aircraft dropped suddenly at a fair amount of speed and hit the water,” Giard said. “We don't have any video or pictures of the incident as of this moment.”</p> <p>There was no distress call or distress beacon from the crashing plane, he said. The aircraft has an electronic locating transmitter onboard, but they have not received any transmission, he said.</p> <p>“That is very typical in times where there is either a hard landing or a crash of an aircraft,” he said.</p> <p>Jon Gabelein of South Whidbey Fire/EMS told KOMO witnesses on the shore reported seeing the plane “nose dive into the water.”</p> <p>Whidbey Island resident Jeff Brewny and his wife were walking their dog Sunday when they heard a loud boom.</p>

“First thought was thunder. It was that loud,” he said. “There was no flash like you get with lightning. So, you know, I thought it was a boat exploded. It was that devastating. My dog went crazy.”

The National Transportation Safety Board said Monday that they’re sending a team of seven to investigate the crash of the DHC-3 Turbine Otter.

The cause of the crash is unknown, authorities said.

Coast Guard searchers found “minimal debris,” Giard said. By Monday afternoon, they had only found three to four long and narrow pieces of aluminum, very few personal items, a seat and some small pieces of foam, he said.

Without a clear picture of the actual crash, and not knowing whether it exploded on impact or immediately sank to the sea floor, 150 to 200 feet (45-60 meters) below, it's difficult to know what happened to the plane, he said.

Four Coast Guard vessels, a rescue helicopter and an aircraft had been involved in the extensive search, along with nearby rescue and law enforcement agencies.

Northwest Seaplanes is a family owned business founded by Clyde Carlson, according to the company's website. It has 24-years of “accident and incident free flying,” the website said.

The company's business office next to the seaplane dock at the Renton Municipal Airport remained closed behind fencing on Monday. The only visible activity was two people hugging near the front door. The only floatplane at the dock appeared to be a small private Cessna.

A woman who answered the phone early Monday said they’re waiting to learn more and are devastated by the crash.

“It’s a small crew. Everyone’s close,” said the woman, who would only give her first name, Michelle. She declined to say more.

The company posted a message on Facebook late Monday saying they were heartbroken.

“We don’t know any details yet regarding the cause of the accident,” the post said. “We are working with the FAA, NTSB and Coastguard. We have been in communication with the families. We are praying for the families involved, including our pilot and his family.”

The Northwest Seaplanes website says its sister company Friday Harbor Seaplanes operates daily flights to and from their Renton base and the San Juan Islands, a scenic archipelago northwest of Seattle that draws tourists from around the world.

Floatplanes, which have pontoons allowing them to land on water, are a common sight around Puget Sound, an inlet of the Pacific Ocean. There are multiple, daily flights between the Seattle area and the San Juan Islands.

These aircraft, which also fly between Seattle and Vancouver, British Columbia, frequently travel over Seattle and land on Lake Washington and on Lake Union, not far from the city's iconic Space Needle.

The airport where the flight was headed Sunday is at the southern tip of Lake Washington, less than 5 miles (8 kilometers) from Seattle. It’s located next to a Boeing plant and is best known for where new 737s first hit the sky.

	<p>In July, 2020, a De Havilland Beaver operated by Brooke's Seaplanes was on a scenic flight in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, with five passengers and a pilot when it collided with a Cessna 206. Eight people were killed.</p> <p>In 2019, a midair crash in Alaska between two sightseeing planes killed six people. The Ketchikan-based floatplanes were carrying passengers from the same cruise ship, the Royal Princess, and were returning from tours of Misty Fjords National Monument.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/05 Seattle teachers prepare for a strike
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/education/seattle-teachers-prepare-for-a-strike-as-negotiations-continue/
GIST	<p>More than a hundred Seattle educators gathered on Labor Day at Judkins Park, stapling and taping signs to wooden pickets in preparation for a potential strike.</p> <p>“Liberation through Public Education,” read one sign in English, Spanish and Vietnamese. Another read, “Listen to educators and students.”</p> <p>On Tuesday, Seattle teachers will find out if they have enough votes to authorize a strike. Then it comes down to whether the Seattle Education Association and Seattle Public Schools can strike a deal before Wednesday, the expected first day of classes.</p> <p>If the impasse remains, Seattle be the second large K-12 school district in the area to be mired in a strike.</p> <p>The Kent School District was supposed to start classes on Aug. 25, but a strike stretches on as the Kent Education Association demands more pay, smaller class sizes, a more manageable staff-to-student ratio in special education and English language learner programs, as well as more staffing for student mental health support.</p> <p>Kent school district officials and the teacher’s association met with a mediator on Labor Day, but still did not reach an agreement, said Timothy Martin, the union’s president.</p> <p>“Once we do, it will require a vote of our members before school can resume,” Martin said in an email. “We will continue to work to reach an agreement and would love to see our students and teachers in school soon.”</p> <p>The Seattle teachers union is negotiating for similar changes to working conditions. Its union members and district officials also met with a mediator Monday, but have yet to come to terms on a new contract.</p> <p>Jennifer Matter, the president of the Seattle teachers union, said classes would begin Wednesday as expected if district officials recognize what students and teachers require.</p> <p>“They’re so disconnected that they have no idea that our proposal is exactly what our students need,” Matter said on a megaphone to a crowd of educators at Judkins Park on Monday afternoon.</p> <p>SEA members have until 9 a.m. Tuesday to vote on authorizing a strike. Matter said the ballots need to be certified, so results should be available shortly after the deadline.</p> <p>On Friday, Seattle district officials said they were optimistic an agreement would be reached before Wednesday, according to the district’s website.</p> <p>Then on Sunday, Seattle school district officials asked union negotiators — in a memorandum of understanding — to agree to start school Wednesday as planned and extend current terms and conditions in collective bargaining agreements until a new contract is negotiated.</p>

	<p>The teachers rejected the proposal. Matter called it a distraction from improving support for students and teachers.</p> <p>SPS Assistant Superintendent of Public Affairs Beverly Redmond said Sunday that district officials understand “the uncertainty about the delay is difficult and unsettling for our students, staff and families.”</p> <p>On Aug. 7, the district shared an update on negotiation proposals, which included a retention bonus for classified employees and one-time incentives for some teachers working with English language learners. The most recent contract between district officials and the teachers union expired Aug. 31.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/05 Lincoln Co. wildfire: level 2, 3 evacuations
SOURCE	https://www.krem.com/article/news/local/wildfire/lincoln-county-washington-fire/293-d6507c71-7b1c-42f8-ab65-f8ebc0260aaf
GIST	<p>LINCOLN COUNTY, Wash. — Updates: According to Lincoln County Sheriff's Office, the Seven Bays fire is burning about 700-800 acres with level 2 and 3 evacuations still in place.</p> <p>As of Monday morning, the fire is 0% contained and there are more than 125 fire crews working on the scene and additional resources assisting in the area.</p> <p>As of Monday morning, highway 25 is open but some roads are closed as firefighters are working on the area, including Miles Creston Road, between Hawk Creek Road and Seven Bays. Residents are asked to stay out of this area until it is reopened due to the danger of falling trees and to allow investigators to do their job. Hume Road is open and drivers and residents are asked to remain vigilant to changing conditions as crews are working in the area, according to the Lincoln County Sheriff's Office Facebook page.</p> <p>Boaters are asked to stay out of the area of Two Rivers/Ft Spokane and be aware fire planes may need even more space further west of there while filling, according to the Lincoln County Sheriff's Office Facebook Page.</p> <p>Information from Sunday: The cause of the fire is still under investigation and the fire is 0% contained. Officials said no structures are threatened at this time, but Level 3 evacuations (GO!) have been established from Highway 25 Hume Road to Mule Ranch Road. People in the way are advised to leave immediately.</p> <p>Level 2 evacuations (SET!) have been established for residents east of Highway 25 from Mule Ranch Road to Egypt Loop Road in the North, with the east boundary being the Egypt Loop Road on both ends. People in this area should be set to leave when prompted.</p> <p>Evacuees are being told to go to Lincoln County's Sheriff's office at 404 Sinclair Street Davenport. An evacuation area will be established for evacuees.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/04 WSP pulls school buses for inspection
SOURCE	https://www.q13fox.com/news/wsp-pulls-school-buses-out-of-fleets-in-annual-inspection
GIST	<p>SEATTLE - Washington State Patrol inspects school buses in every school district in Washington annually before the school year, and FOX 13 pulled the bus inspection recap reports for the 10 largest school districts in Western Washington.</p> <p>This bus inspection is like a school exam that is strictly pass/fail.</p> <p>It's a test that WSP Commercial Vehicle Enforcement Officer, Cristie Lakey, takes personally.</p> <p>"We all have kids or grandkids that are riding some of these school buses," said Lakey.</p>

The CVEO team has an extensive checklist of nearly 150 possible issues they're looking for in and around all school vehicles that carry your kids.

The most common issues that WSP took buses out of service for this year include:

- Emergency parking brake; fail 50-foot test
- 8-way or 4-way light warning system-lights inoperable
- Cracked brake shoe or lining
- Flat tire
- Bad check valve
- Air loss on brake hoses
- Brakes out of adjustment
- Vandal locks not operating properly
- No body fluid kit on bus
- Prohibited items in drivers area
- Inoperable turn signals or headlights
- Broken wheel seal/contaminated brakes

Scott Logan, Chief Ops Manager for Highline Public Schools says his district has an "excellent safety record."

"For the last 11 years in a row, we've gotten a letter from [WSP] showing outstanding inspection," said Logan.

Logan says these letters are sent to districts with out-of-service (OOS) rates under 2% and this year, less than 1% of Highline Public Schools' fleet was taken out of service.

None of the OOS rates even came close to double digits for the following districts:

- Seattle 4%
- Tacoma 6%
- Everett 4%
- Edmonds 3%
- Bellevue 2%
- Northshore 2%
- Lake Washington 1%
- Kent 2%
- Puyallup 1%
- Federal Way 2%

The buses pulled out of service won't be back on the road until they're fixed and put through another inspection.

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HEADLINE	09/05 US: Russia buying NKorea artillery
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/05/us/politics/russia-north-korea-artillery.html
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON — Russia is buying millions of artillery shells and rockets from North Korea, according to newly declassified American intelligence, a sign that global sanctions have severely restricted its supply chains and forced Moscow to turn to pariah states for military supplies.</p> <p>The disclosure comes days after Russia received initial shipments of Iranian-made drones, some of which American officials said had mechanical problems. U.S. government officials said Russia's decision to turn to Iran, and now North Korea, was a sign that sanctions and export controls imposed by the United States and Europe were hurting Moscow's ability to obtain supplies for its army.</p> <p>The United States provided few details from the declassified intelligence about the exact weaponry, timing or size of the shipment, and there is no way yet to independently verify the sale. A U.S. official said that,</p>

beyond short-range rockets and artillery shells, Russia was expected to try to purchase additional North Korean equipment going forward.

“The Kremlin should be alarmed that it has to buy anything at all from North Korea,” said Mason Clark, who leads the Russia team at the Institute for the Study of War.

Before Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, [the White House began declassifying intelligence reports](#) about Moscow’s military plans — then disclosing that material, first to allies privately and then to the public. After something of a lull in the disclosures, the American government has once again begun declassifying information to highlight the struggles of Russia’s military, including the recent intelligence about the purchase of Iranian drones and the Russian army’s [problems recruiting soldiers](#).

Broad economic sanctions, at least so far, have not crippled Russia. Energy prices, driven up by the invasion, have filled its treasury and enabled Moscow to blunt the fallout of its banks being cut off from international finance and curbs on exports and imports. Sanctions against individual Russian oligarchs also have failed to undercut the power of President Vladimir V. Putin.

But American officials said that, when it came to Russia’s ability to rebuild its military, the economic actions of Europe and the United States had been effective. American and European sanctions have blocked Russia’s ability to buy weaponry, or electronics to make that weaponry.

Moscow had hoped that China would be willing to buck those export controls and continue to supply the Russian military. But in recent days, American officials have said that while China was willing to buy Russian oil at a discount, Beijing, at least so far, has respected the export controls aimed at Moscow’s military and not tried to sell either military equipment or components.

Gina Raimondo, the commerce secretary, [has repeatedly warned China](#) that if Semiconductor Manufacturing International Corporation, China’s largest computer chip maker, or other companies violate sanctions against Russia, the United States will effectively shut down those businesses, cutting off their access to the American technology they need to make semiconductors.

With most countries treading carefully in the face of American pressure, Russia has focused its deal making on Iran and North Korea.

Both Iran and North Korea are largely cut off from international commerce thanks to American and international sanctions, meaning neither country has much to lose by cutting deals with Russia. Any deal to buy weaponry from North Korea would be a violation of United Nations resolutions aimed at curbing weapons proliferation from Pyongyang.

It is unclear how much the purchasing from North Korea has to do with the export controls, however. There is nothing high-tech in a 152-millimeter artillery shell or a Katyusha-style rocket that North Korea produces, said Frederick W. Kagan, a military expert at the American Enterprise Institute.

A U.S. official said the new deal with North Korea showed the desperation in Moscow. And Mr. Kagan said turning to North Korea was a sign that Russia was seemingly unable to produce the simplest matériel needed to wage war.

“The only reason the Kremlin should have to buy artillery shells or rockets from North Korea or anyone is because Putin has been unwilling or unable to mobilize the Russian economy for war at even the most basic level,” Mr. Kagan said.

Restricting Russia’s military supply chain is a central part of the American strategy to weaken Moscow, with the aim to hamper both its war effort in Ukraine and its future ability to threaten its neighbors.

It has been clear for months, both from Russian operations in Ukraine and disclosures by the U.S. government, that Moscow has struggled with its high-tech weaponry. Precision-guided weaponry, like

cruise missiles, has experienced high rates of failure. In the early stages of the war, half or more of those weapons either failed to fire or failed to hit their targets.

Russian stocks of those precision weapons have also been depleted, forcing generals to rely less often on missiles and instead build their strategy around a brutal artillery assault that has laid waste to towns in Ukraine's eastern region.

The disclosure that Russia is seeking more artillery ammunition is a sign that Moscow's supply problems are likely deeper than just high-end components for cutting-edge tanks or precision missiles. If Russia is seeking more artillery shells from North Korea, it is facing a shortage or could see one in the future, and its industrial base is struggling to meet the military demands of the war.

"This is very likely an indication of a massive failure of the Russian military industrial complex that likely has deep roots and very serious implications for the Russian armed forces," Mr. Kagan said.

In recent weeks, Ukraine has stepped up its assault on [Russian ammunition depots](#). Ukraine's forces have used the American High Mobility Artillery Rocket System, or HIMARS, and U.S. intelligence reports, to strike behind the front lines and destroy ammunition caches.

While it is not clear what impact that offensive has had on overall stocks of ammunition, Russia was forced to pull back and move its ammunition storage points, reducing the effectiveness of its artillery forces.

There have also been signs that the effectiveness of some Russian artillery shells has been degraded because of storage problems or poor maintenance of its ammunition stocks. To be most effective at wounding opposing troops, artillery shells burst in the air, just before they hit the ground. But the crater pattern created by Russian artillery forces over the summer showed that many of their shells were exploding on the ground, [reducing the damage to Ukrainian trenches](#).

While the condition of North Korean artillery shells is not clear, the country has extensive stocks of the ammunition.

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HEADLINE	09/06 In Moscow 'nothing really has changed'
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/06/world/europe/moscow-war-ukraine-mood.html
GIST	<p>MOSCOW — On a recent evening in Red Square, a corps of elite paratroopers dressed in camouflage performed a battle-like dance with pyrotechnics. An Egyptian performer dressed as a pharaoh rode back and forth in a chariot wielding an ankh, the ancient Egyptian symbol of life, as a band played "Katyusha," a Soviet-era patriotic war song.</p> <p>Nataliya Nikonova, 44, was one of thousands of spectators cheering from the bleachers at a festival celebrating the militaries of Russia and friendly nations including Belarus, India and Venezuela.</p> <p>"I was so thrilled that I just about lost my voice!" she said.</p> <p>Russia's army is now waging a slow-moving war that has left tens of thousands dead and contributed to global inflation and a surge in energy prices.</p> <p>But Ms. Nikonova said she hadn't experienced many disruptions to her life in the past six months.</p> <p>"Nothing has really changed," she said. "Sure, the prices went up, but we can endure that." She rushed off to listen to an encore of "Katyusha" from the Egyptian Military Symphonic Band.</p> <p>Very little about day-to-day life seems to have changed in Moscow, where people have the financial resources to weather significant price increases, unlike much of the rest of the country. GUM, the luxury</p>

mall next to Red Square, is full of shoppers — though many Western stores like Prada, Gucci and Christian Dior are closed — and restaurants and theaters do thriving business. Moscow's roads still teem with luxury cars like Lamborghinis and Porsches.

"A few stores closed because of sanctions, which is frustrating but not that bad," said Yuliya, 18, a recent high-school graduate who was hanging out on a bench in Gorky Park, where Muscovites sunbathe, dance and rollerblade. She and her friends said they don't really think about the fighting in Ukraine that often.

That detachment is exactly what President Vladimir V. Putin is counting on as he executes a domestic strategy of shielding Russians from the hardships of war — no draft, no mass funerals, no feelings of loss or conflict. Much of Russia's effort on the battlefield has not gone as Mr. Putin had planned, but at home, he has mostly succeeded in making Russian life feel as normal as possible.

Most museums and theaters are open, as long as their leadership didn't criticize the Kremlin, and on summer evenings, party boats with effusive revelers ply the nearby Moskva River and people picnic in the grass. The fall seasons in opera and ballet have just begun — though a few anticipated premieres and ongoing productions have been canceled after their directors and stars spoke against the war or fled the country.

"What Russians normally do is protect their everyday lives," said Grigory Yudin, a professor of political philosophy at the Moscow School of Social and Economic Sciences, describing a coping mechanism from the Soviet period that has carried into Mr. Putin's tenure.

"This is the thing that they always prioritize and that they excel at," he said of Russia's leadership, "and they are doing that now with a considerable degree of success, I would say."

But while many Muscovites embrace revelry and willful ignorance, many of the capital's intelligentsia, whose work and life tied them to the West or to Ukraine, are struggling to reconcile the feeling of normalcy with the enormity of being engaged in Europe's biggest land war since World War II.

That was evident on Saturday in the outpouring of sympathy and appreciation for the former Soviet leader Mikhail S. Gorbachev, expressed by thousands of Russians attending his funeral, who represented a silent protest against Mr. Putin and his policies.

As soon as Russian tanks rolled into Ukraine, said Anya, she started reading books about the rise of totalitarianism in Nazi Germany and grappling with the concept of collective guilt.

"It was the end of the world for so many people," said Anya, 34. Like several others interviewed for this article, she did not want to provide her last name for fear of retribution.

"In your name, someone is killing civilians," she said. "And your country is turning into something like North Korea."

She said she went to a protest and signed an antiwar petition, and several days later, she was invited to resign from her job at a public institution.

For many years, Mr. Putin has been cracking down on dissent and protesters, but today it is almost impossible to express disenchantment with the system, and people expressing their views do so with the knowledge that a new law punishes criticism of the war. Almost 16,500 people have been arrested on charges of protesting the aggression in Ukraine since Feb. 24, according to OVD-Info, a Russian human rights organization.

Russians who oppose the fighting feel despised and threatened by their government, spurned by the West — which they believe blames them for not protesting the invasion — and powerless to affect any change. "We all have this feeling of impotence," said Anya. "The fact that you exist and have your opinion doesn't mean anything. There are five, 10, 20 million of us. And it doesn't make any difference."

Muscovites like Anya spent the first months after the conflict started anxious and uncertain. Tens of thousands of them [fled](#). But over the summer, the capital largely returned to normal, buoyed by a soaring ruble, a [silenced opposition](#) and a news media almost completely under the Kremlin's control.

Still, society is changing slowly: While Mr. Putin has sought to infuse a sense of normalcy, he is also working to further [militarize Russian society](#).

Along Moscow's artery roads there are billboards of soldiers listing their rank and title, with a QR code to scan for more information. And there is no shortage of events celebrating Russia's military might.

Thousands of spectators gathered at the Alabino army training ground southwest of Moscow over two weeks to watch the Army International Games, a festival that includes a Tank Biathlon, in which international teams compete to drive a tank through natural obstacles and fire accurately at targets. (Since 2013, when the competition started, Russia has always come in first place.)

"I've been seeing tanks on TV for all this time; I wanted to see them in real life," said Ilya, 34, who drove out to the event from Moscow with his children, 11 and 4.

"I think every war is bad; I am not saying I support the 'Special Military Operation,' or don't," he said, using Mr. Putin's term for the hostilities in Ukraine. "But I trust the leadership in my country, and if they say it is necessary, then it is."

Others said that seeing the weapons on display at the army festival — including Kinzhal missiles being used in Ukraine — made them feel as if they had come from a strong country.

Andrei Yevgenyevich, 55, who was a tank driver in Soviet-controlled Germany in the last days of the Cold War, said the weapons display brought him back to the days when the Soviet Union was a strong and feared global power.

"When you see this, you trust that all is well in your country, that everything is as it should be," he said.

"We were raised in the Soviet tradition, and we love our motherland. This brings pride to our country."

As for the sanctions, he said: "I don't feel any difference. I think America and the West are suffering far more."

This is a common refrain on Russian television. State-run media produce daily segments about the uncertainty countries like Germany are facing over gas prices and soaring inflation in Europe and the United States.

At the army training grounds, children scrambled over tanks, including one that said, "Smash the Fascists," and people of all ages shot automatic rifles. But booths inviting visitors to sign a contract to join the army stood empty, save for the recruiters, indicating that even if nationalism is rising, people are not ready to fight Mr. Putin's war.

"Not a lot of people are coming right now," one military recruiter said, declining to give his name, as the sounds of shots from the nearby firing range could be heard.

For people who are uninterested in army games and accustomed to spending their summers traveling around Europe, there are plenty of homegrown distractions. A recent festival in the art park Nikola-Lenivets, a haven for hipsters a few hours from the capital, drew about 16,000 partygoers in the woods over four days.

	<p>One night, people decked out in facial glitter, faux-fur coats and even a jellyfish costume danced to the music of an upbeat reggae performer who promised he wouldn't leave Russia as many other artists had. The crowd went wild.</p> <p>"At first I was thinking to myself, wow, there is a war 400 kilometers away, and we are at a music festival," said Ivan, a 25-year-old who had just returned to his native Russia after several years abroad.</p> <p>He loosened up eventually.</p> <p>"Life goes on, especially when there is nothing we can do to control the situation," he said. Back at the Red Square festival, a woman named Ekaterina, 26, a brow technician at a beauty salon, said she and her boyfriend, who serves in the military, felt their "spirits raised" by the bands. But she said she was "nervous for the men who are on both sides of the front line."</p> <p>"Here, people act as if nothing is happening. Here is one world, and there," she said, referring to the field of battle, "is a completely different one."</p>
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HEADLINE	09/03 Russians mourn Gorbachev; silent protest
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/03/world/europe/mikhail-gorbachev-russia-funeral.html?action=click&module=RelatedLinks&pgtype=Article
GIST	<p>MOSCOW — Thousands of Russians on Saturday stood for several hours in snaking lines amid a heavy police presence to pay their respects to Mikhail S. Gorbachev, the last Soviet leader, who died on Tuesday.</p> <p>Many Russians blame and revile Mr. Gorbachev for the breakup of the Soviet Union, but people of all ages, many of whom stood solemnly clutching flowers outside Moscow's famed House of the Unions, said that they had come to thank him for something severely restricted today in Russia: freedom.</p> <p>"Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev gave us 30 years of sunlight," said Maksim, 20, a political science student, who carried a large sunflower to place before Mr. Gorbachev's body, which was lying in state in the building's grand hall.</p> <p>"Unfortunately, this time has passed, and there is no more sun, only darkness," Maksim said. "But I am deeply grateful to him for these 30 years."</p> <p>For many, the funeral was a vivid reminder of the rights that Russians have lost under the leadership of President Vladimir V. Putin and as a result of the almost complete dismantling of Mr. Gorbachev's legacy, culminating with the six-month-old war that Russia is prosecuting in Ukraine to take back former Soviet territory.</p> <p>"For so many of us in Moscow, his death seems the death of democracy," said Veronika, 32, an art consultant. The New York Times is using only first names to protect the Russians in attendance from possible retaliation.</p> <p>Amid the throngs, one person was conspicuously absent on Saturday: Mr. Putin. Citing a busy schedule, he did not attend the funeral. Instead, Mr. Putin paid his last respects to Mr. Gorbachev on Thursday, taking a bouquet of flowers to the hospital in Moscow where he died.</p> <p>Mr. Putin's absence sent a clear message: While the Kremlin wanted to avoid any direct condemnation of a person who was once at its helm, it also wanted to distance itself from the symbol of an era whose legacy Mr. Putin is now largely trying to undo.</p> <p>The funeral was a rare opportunity for like-minded Russians to gather in one place, though, at a time when protest and dissent have been effectively criminalized.</p>

“They were burying their freedom and their hopes,” said Andrei Kolesnikov, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace based in Moscow. “This is really such a peaceful and sad protest against what Putin was doing all these years — and against Putin himself.”

Mr. Gorbachev died this past week at age 91, after what the Central Clinical Hospital in Moscow said was “a long and grave illness.” Mr. Gorbachev’s admirers credit him with ending the Cold War and [achieving significant strides in nuclear disarmament](#). Inside Russia, he gave “the people of the Soviet Union the possibility of being independent, of building their lives independently,” his longtime interpreter, Pavel Palazhchenko, said in an interview.

On Saturday, inside the grand hall of the House of the Unions, known as the Hall of Pillars — the same place where Russians bade farewell to Lenin and Stalin — people filed past Mr. Gorbachev’s open coffin, which was flanked by two honor guards. A mountain of flowers left by mourners lay on a long table in front of the coffin, which was beneath a Russian flag instead of the Soviet red banner.

Mr. Gorbachev’s family members sat beside the coffin, and close friends, like Dmitri A. Muratov, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2021 (Mr. Gorbachev also received the prize, in 1990), sat nearby. In the early 1990s, Mr. Gorbachev [helped found](#) the newspaper that Mr. Muratov edits, Novaya Gazeta. The paper was forced to suspend publication in March, threatened by a new wartime censorship law, and the Russian authorities now [seek to revoke its license](#).

There were so many mourners that guards urged people not to linger in front of Mr. Gorbachev’s coffin. Many left the hall in tears.

“He gave us freedom, and peace, and music — everything that is most dear to us,” said Ekaterina, 75, who was crying as she exited onto the central Dmitrovka Street, which was cordoned off by law enforcement. “Condolences to all of us because this also concerns you,” she said, referring to the West and reflecting on how Mr. Gorbachev had opened Russia up to Europe and the United States.

Since Mr. Gorbachev’s death on Tuesday, it was clear that the Kremlin would not accord him the pomp of the grand state ceremonies that characterized funerals of his Soviet predecessors.

And while the absence of foreign dignitaries — who lionize Mr. Gorbachev for ending the Cold War — was a sign of Russia’s current isolation, many high-profile Russian figures did attend the ceremony on Saturday. Dmitri A. Medvedev, a former president; Sergei Stepashin, a former prime minister; and some popular culture figures, including [Alla Pugacheva, a pop superstar](#), all paid their respects on Saturday.

Also in attendance were some who have been critical of Mr. Gorbachev’s legacy, including Dmitri Kiselyov, the host of the flagship weekly news show on Russian state television.

Despite trying to distance himself from Mr. Gorbachev, Mr. Putin on Wednesday acknowledged the last Soviet leader’s legacy without praise, calling him “a politician and statesman who had a huge impact on the course of world history.”

“He deeply understood that reforms were necessary,” Mr. Putin added. “He strove to offer his own solutions to urgent problems.”

Mr. Kolesnikov of the Carnegie Endowment said that Mr. Putin’s “bunkerized” farewell to Mr. Gorbachev, a reference to the Russian president’s increasing isolation since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic in 2020, was indicative of the Kremlin’s attitude toward the man Mr. Putin blames for the collapse of the Soviet Union, which he sees as the “greatest geopolitical catastrophe” of the 20th century.

“It is a bit strange that the Gorbachev funeral took this unprecedented form,” Mr. Kolesnikov said. “This is a marker of Putin’s attitude toward Gorbachev. On the one hand, he can’t be too close to his figure, but on the other hand, they can’t ignore totally the scale.”

The Kremlin said after Mr. Gorbachev's death that there would be only "elements of a state funeral," including an honor guard. By contrast, when Mr. Gorbachev's successor, [Boris N. Yeltsin, died in 2007](#), Mr. Putin, who succeeded him, [declared](#) a day of national mourning for his funeral. The ceremony was broadcast live on state television, and the lowering of Mr. Yeltsin's coffin was accompanied by an artillery salute.

Mr. Yeltsin's funeral was attended by numerous foreign dignitaries, including acting state leaders and former ones such as Presidents Bill Clinton and George H.W. Bush. Mr. Gorbachev's funeral was attended by Prime Minister Viktor Orban of Hungary. Mr. Kolesnikov said that the presence of the far-right Hungarian leader, who has maintained close ties with Mr. Putin, was "insulting" to Mr. Gorbachev's legacy.

Though a number of foreign ambassadors paid their respects on Saturday, the absence of a wider group of global representatives at Mr. Gorbachev's ceremony highlighted Russia's isolation as its current leader is engaged in [the brutal war in Ukraine](#).

As Mr. Gorbachev's rule divided Russia, so did his funeral. While thousands stood in line to pay their last respects, others called for recording every attendee. "These are the most decisive, brave, and sincere of all enemies of Russia," Igor Girkin, a former Russian intelligence colonel who took part in the conflict in the Donbas region of Ukraine when it began in 2014, [wrote on his Telegram channel](#).

After the ceremony on Saturday, Mr. Gorbachev was buried next to [his wife, Raisa](#), at the Novodevichy Cemetery in Moscow. A few years before his death, in an interview with the documentary filmmaker Vitaly Mansky, Mr. Gorbachev said that his love for his wife had constituted the meaning of his life.

"What can be higher than the feeling of being in love and being loved by a woman?" he asked.

Another scene in the documentary was also telling: As Mr. Gorbachev celebrated the arrival of 2020 among a small group of associates, he sang along with the Russian national anthem, which played at the stroke of midnight.

When the choir sang the line, "Be glorious, our free fatherland!" Mr. Gorbachev's face lit up with a boyish smile.

"And who brought the freedom?" he said.

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HEADLINE	09/05 California Labor Day heatwave sets record
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/05/us/california-heat-wave-record-labor-day.html
GIST	<p>A vast dome of high pressure has edged westward and settled over California, inflicting sweltering and record-setting temperatures across much of the state and threatening to strain the state's power grid.</p> <p>Record high daily temperatures scorched several cities across the Bay Area on Monday, with oppressive heat forecast to continue for days, according to the National Weather Service. Gilroy hit 112 degrees, breaking a daily record of 106 that was set just two years ago. Temperatures in Livermore hit 116, topping a daily record of 108 degrees from 1950.</p> <p>In Southern California, Pasadena touched 103 degrees over the weekend, breaking a daily record set in 1938. Burbank hit 110 degrees. In the Central Valley, a federal meteorologist forecast that Fresno, a city of more than 500,000, would top out at 114 degrees on Tuesday — three degrees higher than the city's all-time high temperature for September.</p>

“It’s definitely record-setting,” said Bill South, lead meteorologist for the National Weather Service in Hanford, Calif., where the temperature is forecast to hit 110. “We get heat waves in September but rarely as intense as this one.”

State officials called on the public Monday to double or triple their efforts to conserve electricity, warning that record-setting demand for power could force rolling blackouts by the end of the day.

“We have now entered the most intense phase of this heat wave,” said Elliot Mainzer, chief executive of the California Independent System Operator, which oversees the grid.

Over the past week, Californians have reduced their electricity use to as much as 2 percent below forecast, giving the grid operators a significant buffer, said Mr. Mainzer. But as the heat wave, which is setting records even at night, continues through the rest of the week, “we need two to three times as much conservation as we’ve been experiencing to keep the power on,” Mr. Mainzer said.

In August 2020, several hundred thousand Californians lost power in rolling blackouts during a heat wave, but the state sidestepped that scenario last summer. Gov. Gavin Newsom said the state had added least 8,000 megawatts of clean energy to the grid since 2020, and he signed legislation last week that may allow the state’s last operating nuclear power station, at Diablo Canyon, to remain in service past its scheduled closure in 2025. But severe drought has reduced the availability of hydropower, and solar power generation wanes as night falls, leaving the state to rely heavily on aging gas-fired power plants and on imported electricity from other states.

Across California, officials have asked residents to set their air-conditioning at a sticky 78 degrees in hopes of conserving power. When extreme heat rolls in, air-conditioning acts as a lifesaver. A similar heat wave hit California in 1955 and claimed 950 lives, but nothing like that magnitude of public health disaster has resulted from a heat wave in the state since then.

Though the current heat wave is setting records, scorching September heat is not unusual in California. High pressure builds in — in this case, moving westward from New Mexico, Arizona and Utah — and except in the coastal cities, temperatures rise well in excess of 100 degrees.

The extreme heat dries out forests and grassland, and can lead to disastrous forest fires, particularly at times like now when California is afflicted with a long-running drought. On Monday afternoon, a brush fire broke out in the hills by the city of Hemet, in Riverside County, and quickly grew to 500 acres, [Cal Fire reported](#).

Two of the major wildfires currently burning in the state — the Fairview fire in Hemet, east of Los Angeles, and the [Mill fire in northern Siskiyou County](#) — have each claimed at least two lives so far, fire authorities said. But the total acreage burned so far this year trails significantly behind those of the past two years.

Many meteorologists and scientists point to more frequent and severe heat waves around the world as clear evidence of the effects of global warming, and that is consistent with many studies. But drawing a direct link between climate change and any single weather event can prove tenuous.

An increase in heat waves is evident in the temperature records, but over the past century, the decade with the highest frequency of heat waves was the 1930s. High-temperature records for individual California cities stretch back more than half a century.

“Obviously, climate change is real and very important, and we must move aggressively,” said Roger Pielke Jr., a professor of environmental science at the University of Colorado Boulder. “But it’s not like there’s a safe climate that we’ve turned into a dangerous one.”

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SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/05/business/newsom-california-fast-food-wages.html
GIST	<p>California will enact a sweeping new approach to regulating fast-food restaurants after Gov. Gavin Newsom said Monday that he had signed a bill to effectively set a minimum wage in the industry and to create new safety and anti-discrimination rules.</p> <p>Amid resistance from fast-food companies, the State Legislature last week approved the bill, which will set up a 10-member council composed of representatives from labor and employers to oversee the industry's labor practices in California.</p> <p>The council can raise the industry minimum as high as \$22 an hour next year, versus a \$15.50 minimum for the rest of the state, after which the minimum will be adjusted for inflation. The council can also issue new labor standards.</p> <p>"Today's action gives hardworking fast-food workers a stronger voice and seat at the table to set fair wages and critical health and safety standards across the industry," Mr. Newsom said in a statement.</p> <p>Industry groups complained that the bill would raise costs that restaurants would pass on to consumers at a time of rapidly rising prices. They argued that state regulators already had the authority to improve health and safety conditions at fast-food restaurants.</p> <p>"This bill is a fork in the eye to franchise owners and customers at a time when it hurts most," Matthew Haller, the president of the International Franchise Association, said in a statement.</p> <p>But labor groups argued that the bill was necessary to improve conditions for a vulnerable worker population. Many advocates have noted that traditional enforcement relies on workers being willing to come forward with claims against their employers, something fast-food workers are often reluctant to do.</p> <p>"There are large number of workers in general who are less likely to complain — that means you need to have government play a larger role than it would in other cases," said David Weil, who under oversaw the agency that enforces the federal minimum wage under President Barack Obama.</p> <p>Mr. Weil nonetheless expressed concern that the bill could draw resources from enforcement of regulations in other industries where workers are vulnerable, like janitorial, home care and agriculture.</p> <p>The bill is a major step toward so-called sectoral bargaining, in which workers and management negotiate wages and conditions across an entire industry as opposed to at individual companies, often location by location, which is the standard approach in the United States.</p> <p>The Service Employees International Union, which has nearly two million members and is a major backer of the bill, argued that a sectoral approach was necessary because workers find it inefficient and often futile to try to improve conditions by unionizing at individual restaurants, where they lack the leverage to force their employers' hands.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/05 Shelling cuts power into nuclear plant
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/09/05/world/ukraine-russia-war
GIST	<p>KYIV, Ukraine — Europe's largest nuclear power plant was disconnected from the nation's power grid after renewed shelling nearby on Monday, according to Ukrainian energy officials, once again placing critical cooling systems at risk of relying solely on emergency backup power.</p> <p>Herman Galushchenko, Ukraine's energy minister, said a fire resulting from the shelling had severed the Zaporizhzhia plant's last connection to a reserve line that had provided its only source of outside power.</p>

Reactor No. 6, the only working reactor at the plant, was still producing power for the facility itself, and as of Monday evening, engineers had not switched on diesel generators, according to an official from Energoatom, the Ukrainian company responsible for operating the facility.

Mr. Galushchenko said it was yet another precarious moment made more threatening by the fact that firefighting crews had not been able to reach the site of the blaze.

“Any repairs to the lines are now impossible,” he said. “Fighting is taking place around the station.”

An International Atomic Energy Agency inspection team that had been at the plant left two monitors behind in the hopes that they could bear witness to events as they unfold and ease tensions at the facility, which is held by Russian forces but is still run by Ukrainian engineers. The larger hope had been that the shelling would stop.

The agency said that, according to Ukrainian officials, the reserve line had been “deliberately disconnected in order to extinguish a fire.”

“The line itself is not damaged, and it will be reconnected once the fire is extinguished,” the agency, which is part of the United Nations, said.

[Edwin Lyman](#), a nuclear power expert at the Union of Concerned Scientists, a private group in Cambridge, Mass., said the current situation — in which the plant is relying on one of its own reactors to supply power to cooling systems — was “not unique, but it’s not standard practice.”

He noted that the International Atomic Energy Agency, which sets reactor safety standards for nuclear plants, published [a technical document](#) in 2018 that details the backup procedure.

“Some existing nuclear power plant technologies have this capability,” the I.A.E.A. document said, “while others do not.” Even plants that have the capability, it noted, may face “a time limit, generally of a few hours,” for the backup power.

Najmedin Meshkati, a professor of civil and environmental engineering at the University of Southern California, said the loss of offsite power — which has happened at the Zaporizhzhia plant at least twice in the last few weeks — was “one of the most dreadful events that could happen to a nuclear plant.”

Dr. Meshkati, who was a member of the committee appointed by the United States’ National Academy of Sciences to [identify lessons](#) from the disaster at the Fukushima nuclear power plant in Japan, said that it did not make sense for the reactor to be running.

An engineer in contact with people at the plant and in the satellite town of Enerhodar said on Monday that her colleagues had reported severe shelling in the area over the past three days.

“Residential houses have been damaged, and there are many more people injured and killed than reported in the Ukrainian media,” said the engineer, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because she feared reprisals against her friends and family. “People continue leaving the town, including the plant’s employees.”

Ukrainian officials sought to keep up pressure on the International Atomic Energy Agency to offer a robust assessment of both the conditions at the plant and the challenges facing the Ukrainian engineers charged with its safe operation.

Repeated shelling over the past month has damaged all of the plant’s connections to four high-voltage external power lines, forcing it to use a lower-voltage reserve line to power the cooling equipment needed to prevent meltdowns. It was that reserve line that was cut off on Monday.

	<p>When the main power lines and the reserve line were damaged by shelling and fires on Aug. 25, a blackout at the plant forced it to rely on diesel generators to prevent a disaster.</p> <p>Rafael Mariano Grossi, the director of the International Atomic Energy Agency, said at a news conference on Friday that his biggest concern regarding the physical safety of the facility was related to a reliable connection to external power.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/05 Ukrainian progress, Russia confusion
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/09/05/world/ukraine-russia-war#zelensky-two-towns-retaken
GIST	<p>KYIV, Ukraine — The Kremlin-backed occupation authorities in southern Ukraine’s Kherson region said on Monday that they were putting a planned referendum to join Russia on hold, then walked that statement back, saying that there was no set date but that everything would proceed “according to plan.”</p> <p>The muddled statements suggested confusion on the ground involving Russia’s efforts to cement its control over occupied territories, most provocatively through referendums that Ukraine and the West have called shams. For months, the Russian-installed authorities have compelled Ukrainians to adopt a Russian way of life, replacing currency with the ruble, handing out Russian passports and routing internet traffic through Russian servers.</p> <p>Ukrainian and Western officials warn that referendums are the next step in Russia’s plan, following the model the Kremlin used before it formally annexed the Crimean Peninsula.</p> <p>The confusion emerged amid a complex Ukrainian fight to reclaim territory in the south.</p> <p>President Volodymyr Zelensky of Ukraine said the country’s forces had retaken two villages in the Kherson region. While he offered few details — and military analysts cautioned that the campaign would be long — Mr. Zelensky’s remarks were the first public hints of progress since last week, when Ukraine began its most ambitious counteroffensive since driving Russian forces from around Kyiv and other cities in the north.</p> <p>The planned referendum is part of Russia’s efforts to deepen its hold on the Kherson region, which it has held since the early days of the war. Residents reported that proxy officials had started printing ballots, and the U.S. warned that “sham” voting would soon get underway.</p> <p>The Ukrainian military’s intelligence unit said on Monday that special forces had targeted sites involved in the preparations for a vote.</p> <p>“The place where ballots were stored for the pseudo-referendum was destroyed,” the Ukrainian military said in a statement, whose claims could not be independently verified. “The warehouse was blown up by an explosion from inside the premises. All available printed materials were destroyed.”</p> <p>The Ukrainian offensive is focused on isolating and attacking Russian forces on the western side of the Dnipro River, which bisects the Kherson region. By pounding Russian ammunition depots and repeatedly attacking the four main river crossings, Ukraine is hoping to starve Russian forces of munitions and supplies and force them to either retreat or surrender.</p> <p>Ukraine’s military has imposed sweeping restrictions on journalists and urged people not to publicize details of the operations. Moscow tried to cast the offensive as a failure even before it began. But in recent days, some Russian military bloggers have noted Ukrainian advances.</p> <p>And Kirill Stremousov, the deputy head of the Russian-appointed administration in Kherson, told Rossiya-1, Russia’s state-run television network on Monday that “events taking place” had forced the referendum there to be delayed.</p>

Several hours later, he walked that statement back on Telegram, saying a referendum would take place “in any weather” and that everything was going “according to plan.” He added, “The referendum will definitely take place, no one will cancel it, it is just that we didn’t plan the date.”

More than half the local population is estimated to have already fled the Russian occupation, and Ukraine’s military high command said on Monday that Russian occupation forces in Kherson had imposed a ban on the movement of local residents.

“In particular, people are prohibited from crossing the Dnipro River both by bridges and by watercraft,” the military said. “In case of violation of the ban, the occupiers threaten to open fire.”

With details around the offensive scarce, both militaries are waging an information battle to control the narrative of what military analysts say could be one of the war’s most significant confrontations to date.

On Monday, the Ukrainian military’s southern command claimed that the 127th Regiment of Russia’s 1st Army Corps had refused to fight.

“One of the reasons is unsatisfactory all-round support: Personnel in advanced positions were left even without water,” the Ukrainian military said in a statement. “The special services of the occupying forces took measures against the rebels — they were taken out of their positions.”

The claims could not be independently verified.

In a sign of the hunger for good news, Ukrainian social media accounts lit up Sunday night with videos and images of a soldier hoisting a Ukrainian flag on a rooftop.

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HEADLINE	09/05 Hawkish diplomat takes control UK
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/05/world/europe/britain-truss-prime-minister-johnson.html
GIST	<p>LONDON — As a passionate 19-year-old student at Oxford in 1994, Elizabeth Truss called for a referendum to abolish the British monarchy, telling an audience of fellow Liberal Democrats, “We do not believe that people should be born to rule.”</p> <p>Three decades later, Ms. Truss, now 47 and known as Liz, will travel to a Scottish castle on Tuesday to be anointed by Queen Elizabeth II as Britain’s new prime minister, completing a political odyssey from rabble-rousing republican to tradition-cloaked leader of the Conservative Party.</p> <p>Ms. Truss long ago pivoted to embrace the monarchy as being good for British democracy, just as she long ago abandoned the Liberal Democrats for the Conservatives. More recently, she switched sides on Brexit, opposing the drive for Britain to leave the European Union before the 2016 referendum, then reversing course to become one of its most ardent evangelists.</p> <p>Her ideological dexterity — critics would call it opportunism — has helped propel Ms. Truss to the pinnacle of British politics. How well it will prepare her for the rigors of the job is another question, given the dire economic trends enveloping the country, and a Tory party that seems torn between desire for a fresh start and regret about tossing out her flamboyant, larger-than-life predecessor, Boris Johnson.</p> <p>By her own admission, Ms. Truss has little of Mr. Johnson’s charisma. Awkward where he is easygoing, staccato where he is smooth, she nevertheless scaled the party’s ranks with what colleagues describe as nerve, drive and an appetite for disruptive politics. When Mr. Johnson fell into trouble, she positioned herself adroitly, never publicly breaking with him while staying in the spotlight as a hawkish foreign secretary.</p>

“She has so much confidence in her instincts,” said Marc Stears, a political scientist who tutored Ms. Truss when she was at Oxford. “She is willing to take risks and say the kinds of things that other people aren’t willing to say. Sometimes, that works for her; other times, it hurts her.”

Wooden in public, Ms. Truss is fun in private, friends say, with a direct, informal manner, a weakness for karaoke and an unabashed love for the pop star Taylor Swift. She once shared a selfie with Ms. Swift from an awards show, adding the caption, “Look what you made me do,” the title of one of Ms. Swift’s hit songs.

Ms. Truss will need all her instincts and agility to navigate the job she is inheriting from Mr. Johnson. Drummed out of office by his party’s lawmakers after a string of scandals, he has left behind a daunting pile of problems, not unlike those that confronted Margaret Thatcher when she became Britain’s first female prime minister in 1979 during a previous period of economic hardship.

[Ms. Truss has modeled herself on Thatcher](#), posing on a tank like her heroine once did in West Germany and wearing silk pussy-bow blouses, a staple of the Thatcher wardrobe. But her politics more closely resemble those of another hero of the right, Ronald Reagan: a clarion call for lower taxes and smaller government, coupled with a celebration of post-Brexit Britain as an “aspiration nation.”

That message [appealed to the 160,000 or so](#) mostly white and mostly aging members of the Conservative Party, who chose it over the hard truths offered by her opponent, Rishi Sunak, a former chancellor of the Exchequer. Now, she will have to pivot yet again, to lead a diverse, divided country facing its worst economic news in a generation.

“One of the things that has benefited Liz Truss is that she’s tribal,” said Jill Rutter, a senior research fellow at U.K. in a Changing Europe, a research institute in London. “She’s very willing to embrace everything about a team. The trouble with being a team player is she now needs to define the agenda.”

Born in 1975, four years before Thatcher took power, Ms. Truss grew up in an avowedly left-wing family, with a father who was a mathematician and a mother who was a teacher and nurse. She talks often of going to a public high school in the hard-knocks city of Leeds, which she said “let down” its students with low expectations, little opportunity and a local council caught in the grip of political correctness.

Some of her contemporaries dispute her account of her school days. They note that she grew up in a comfortable district of the city that long voted Conservative. They also accuse her of slighting her teachers, who helped her gain admission — after a year living in Canada with her family — to Merton College, one of the most academically rigorous of the Oxford colleges.

At Oxford, Ms. Truss studied philosophy, politics and economics, an elite degree program that has produced a club of prominent politicians, including a former prime minister, David Cameron. Some have criticized the program for putting a premium on being smooth-talking and a quick study. But Mr. Stears said Ms. Truss did not conform to the cliché of a P.P.E. student.

“Her particular skill was not to master a brief or be glib or facile, but to come up with something unexpected,” he said. “Every piece of work she came up with was provocative. She revels in controversy and provoking people.”

Politics drew her early, and Ms. Truss became president of the Oxford University Liberal Democrats, where she campaigned to legalize marijuana. Soon after graduating in 1996, however, she switched to the Conservatives, a party then careering into the political wilderness. She worked in the private sector, for the energy giant Shell and for Cable & Wireless, qualifying as a chartered accountant.

In 2000, Ms. Truss married Hugh O’Leary, an accountant she met at a party conference and with whom she now has two daughters. Her personal life briefly threatened her career in 2005, after she had an extramarital relationship with a married member of Parliament, Mark Field, whom the party had appointed as her political mentor. Mr. Field’s marriage broke up; Ms. Truss’s survived.

Elected to Parliament in 2010 as a member for South West Norfolk, Ms. Truss went on to hold six ministerial jobs under three Conservative prime ministers. Her track record, people who know her said, was mixed, and she struggled with public speaking.

While serving as environment secretary in 2014, she was widely mocked for a speech in which she lightly noted that Britain imported two-thirds of its cheese, then switched to a scowl and added portentously, “That is a disgrace!”

She was more persuasive in campaigning against Britain’s exit from the European Union. Speaking to a food and beverage industry group, Ms. Truss said, “I think the British people are sensible people. They understand fundamentally that economically, Britain will be better off staying in a reformed E.U.”

After the 2016 vote, Ms. Truss reversed course to become a Brexit cheerleader. “I was wrong, and I am prepared to admit I was wrong,” she said recently, contending that the warnings about the calamitous effects of Brexit had been overblown and that it had, in fact, unleashed benefits.

While few fault Ms. Truss for her youthful switch from Liberal Democrat to Tory, many criticize her retroactive endorsement of Brexit. “That’s not a serious answer,” said Ms. Rutter of U.K. in a Changing Europe. “The evidence is mounting up that if you make trade with your biggest trading partner more difficult, it hurts your economy.”

The U-turn did not hinder her career. Ms. Truss cycled through jobs in the Justice Department and the Treasury before Mr. Johnson named her international trade minister in 2019. She roamed the world, signing post-Brexit trade agreements with Japan, Australia and other countries. Analysts noted they were largely cut-and-paste versions of European Union deals, but she reaped the publicity.

“Very early on, it appeared to me that she was a likely candidate for prime minister,” said Robert E. Lighthizer, who opened talks on a trans-Atlantic deal with Ms. Truss as President Donald J. Trump’s trade representative.

Along the way, Ms. Truss expressed a fascination with disruptive forces, like the ride-hailing service Uber. She once posted on Twitter that the younger generation of Britons were “#Uber-riding #Airbnb-ing #Deliveroo-eating #freedomfighters.”

“She’s been very keen to define herself as a disrupter and to make a link from that to a political approach that would benefit the country,” said Bronwen Maddox, director of Chatham House, the London research institution. “There is something refreshing about that, as well as obviously a danger.”

Like Thatcher, she also presents herself as a fierce defender of Western democracy. Elevated to foreign secretary in 2021, Ms. Truss outflanked even Mr. Johnson in her hard line against Russia. “Putin must lose in Ukraine,” she declared last March during a visit to Lithuania. She held a famously icy meeting on the eve of the war with the Russian foreign minister, Sergey V. Lavrov.

Ms. Truss, colleagues say, will relish the prospect of facing off against Mr. Putin. But some predict her bigger nemesis will be Mr. Johnson. Ambitious and still popular with the Tory grass roots, he is likely to remain a news-making fixture — one who could taunt Ms. Truss from the backbenches of Parliament or in a newspaper column, according to Gavin Barwell, who served as chief of staff to Mr. Johnson’s predecessor, Theresa May.

“He’s going to be like Banquo’s ghost,” Mr. Barwell said, referring to the apparition who tormented Shakespeare’s Macbeth. “The moment she gets into political difficulty, there’s going to be a bring-back-Boris movement.”

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SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/sep/05/georgia-floods-us-heat-west-climate-crisis
GIST	<p>More than 80 million people in the eastern US were under flash flood watches late on Monday, marking still more extreme weather in a country reeling from record heatwaves in some regions, as the US increasingly feels the effects of the climate crisis.</p> <p>In Georgia, the threat of torrential downpours became a reality Sunday afternoon, spurring a flash flood emergency in western portions of the state, CNN reported.</p> <p>The “one-in-1,000-year rainfall event” caused rivers and creeks to swell. Authorities carried out water rescues as homes and businesses were flooded; meteorologists believe that the area could see another one to three inches of rain, according to the news network.</p> <p>Potentially dangerous weather is not limited to the area stretching from southern Appalachia to New England. In the US west, residents are facing the possibility of power outages on Monday and early this week while temperatures continue to soar.</p> <p>This weekend, Salt Lake City broke its record temperature for September, hitting 103F (39.4C). Long Beach, California, peaked at 108F (42.2C), breaking a past daily high, Forbes reported.</p> <p>These extremes come as global heating threatens to make large portions of the US west and south – which are seeing a population boom – so hot they are unlivable.</p> <p>Nearly 50 million US residents across six states were under excessive heat warnings as of Monday morning. In some of these areas, these advisories might continue until the week’s end, Axios reported.</p> <p>The National Weather Service’s Los Angeles office on Sunday described the heat in the metropolitan area as a “kiln-like environment”.</p> <p>California’s Death Valley, already one of the hottest areas on Earth, could meet or exceed its record high temperature of 125F (51.7C) this week.</p> <p>The region could even exceed the highest global temperature for September, 126F (52.2C), Axios reported. Dry conditions, meanwhile, have ramped up wildfire risks.</p> <p>“Record-setting heat, dry conditions and strong winds are expected in the north-west, Great Basin, and northern Rockies areas,” the national interagency fire center said. “These conditions will increase the potential for significant wildfire activity.”</p> <p>The center reported 68 “active large fires”, spanning 438,904 acres.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/06 Day 195 of the Russia invasion
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/sep/06/russia-ukraine-war-latest-what-we-know-on-day-195-of-the-invasion
GIST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ukraine’s southern offensive has prompted Kherson separatists to “pause” a planned referendum on whether to become part of Russia. Russian state news agency Tass reported that the head of Kherson’s Russian-appointed authorities, Kirill Stremousov, said plans for a referendum on joining Russia had been “paused” because of the security situation. Ukraine has repelled Russian offensives in the east as well as hindering Russian positions near Kramatorsk, a key town in eastern Donetsk region, its armed forces claimed. In a situational update, it also claimed that Ukrainian troops had successes in disrupting Russian crossings near Kherson and in using long-range artillery in Kharkiv. In a rare acknowledgment of the Ukrainian counter-offensive, Russia said it pushed back assaults in Kherson. The backup power line at the Russian-held Zaporizhzhia power plant in Ukraine has been disconnected to extinguish a fire, officials said on Monday. “Due to a fire caused by shelling, the

	<p>[backup] line was disconnected, that is the last line linking the ZNPP/ZTPP hub to the power system of Ukraine.” As a result, the plant’s sixth and last functioning reactor was disconnected from the grid, Ukrainian operator Energoatom said. However the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said the line itself was not damaged. “The ZNPP continues to receive the electricity it needs for safety from its sole operating reactor,” it said. The back-up line “will be re-connected once the fire has been extinguished”, the UN nuclear watchdog added.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four of the six UN mission members at the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant have left the site, Energoatom, Ukraine’s state enterprise operating all four nuclear power stations in the country, has said. The remaining two IAEA experts will stay on a permanent basis, it said. The agency is drawing up a report to be released this week. • Liz Truss’s imminent arrival as British prime minister has been greeted with scorn from the Kremlin and praise in Ukraine. “I wouldn’t like to say that things can change for the worse, because it’s hard to imagine anything worse,” Vladimir Putin’s chief spokesperson, Dmitry Peskov, said when asked if Moscow expected any shift in relations with Britain. “But unfortunately, this cannot be ruled out.” Ukrainian politicians offered an exuberant welcome. “In Liz, we Truss” tweeted Ukrainian deputy Rustem Umerov. “Mrs Truss is a solid supporter of Ukraine. Hope for a fruitful ongoing partnership between the UK and Ukraine.” President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said he was “looking forward to the start of cooperation” with Truss. • Ukraine has sought political backing in Brussels for the creation of a special tribunal to prosecute Russian military and political leaders for their role in the war. Several Ukrainian leaders attending a conference on war crimes accountability in the European capital on Monday argued for a court dedicated to prosecuting high-level Russian perpetrators, in addition to the International Criminal Court. • Russia will not resume in full its gas supplies to Europe until the west lifts its sanctions against Moscow, the Kremlin said, as gas prices surged on Monday and the pound and euro slumped. Speaking to journalists on Monday, Dmitry Peskov, the Kremlin’s spokesperson, blamed sanctions for Russia’s failure to deliver gas through the Nord Stream 1 pipeline. “It is these sanctions imposed by the western states that have brought the situation to what we see now.” • A Russian court has sentenced journalist Ivan Safronov to 22 years in prison on trumped-up treason charges, a record sentence that has shocked those who gathered to protest against his imprisonment. Safronov, a former defence reporter for the Kommersant and Vedomosti dailies, was tried on secret evidence. • A court in Moscow also stripped the independent newspaper Novaya Gazeta of its print media licence, effectively banning the newspaper from operating inside Russia. Editor-in-chief, Dmitry Muratov, said the ruling was “a political hit job, without the slightest legal basis”. He said the paper would appeal. • The Russian president, Vladimir Putin, approved a new foreign policy doctrine based around the concept of a “Russian World”, a notion that conservative ideologues have used to justify intervention abroad in support of Russian-speakers. The 31-page “humanitarian policy”, published on Monday, says Russia should “protect, safeguard and advance the traditions and ideals of the Russian World”.
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HEADLINE	09/05 Russia: no gas supplies to Europe
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/sep/05/russia-will-not-resume-gas-supplies-to-europe-until-sanctions-lifted-says-moscow
GIST	<p>Russia will not resume in full its gas supplies to Europe until the west lifts its sanctions against Moscow, the Kremlin said, as concerns over Russian gas supplies continued to drive up energy prices.</p> <p>Speaking to journalists on Monday, Dmitry Peskov, the Kremlin’s spokesperson, blamed sanctions “introduced against our country by western countries including Germany and the UK” for Russia’s failure to deliver gas through the Nord Stream 1 pipeline.</p> <p>“Other reasons that would cause problems with the pumping don’t exist,” Peskov was cited by the Interfax news agency as saying.</p>

Peskov added that Russia's full resumption of gas supplies via Nord Stream 1 was "undoubtedly" dependent on whether the west would lift its sanctions on Moscow. "It is these sanctions imposed by the western states that have brought the situation to what we see now."

Peskov's statements on Monday are the clearest indication yet that Russia intends to force the EU to lift sanctions imposed against Moscow over its invasion of Ukraine in exchange for Russia restarting its gas deliveries.

The leading Russian energy supplier Gazprom announced on Friday evening that a suspension of gas supplies heading westwards through the Nord Stream 1 pipeline would be extended indefinitely, citing "malfunctions" on a turbine along the pipeline.

Gazprom has similarly blamed western sanctions for disrupting gas deliveries, saying the manufacturer Siemens could not perform repairs on the turbines used in Nord Stream 1 because of sanctions against the Russian state energy company.

The EU has rejected Gazprom's claims, accusing Putin of weaponising its gas exports.

Nord Stream 1 is the single biggest pipeline for gas from Russia to Europe and has the capacity to deliver 55bn cubic metres (bcm) of gas a year. Continued supplies through the pipeline are seen as crucial to prevent a deepening of the energy crisis.

The energy crisis in Europe, triggered by lower Russian gas flows, is seen as a major test of the block's support for Ukraine.

After failing to achieve most of its military objectives in Ukraine, analysts believe the Kremlin is hoping record energy prices paired with possible food shortages this winter will push Europe to strong-arm Ukraine into a truce on Moscow's terms.

Russian officials have been eager to point to growing anger in the EU over rising prices, with Peskov on Monday saying it was clear that life was getting "worse for people, businessmen, and companies in Europe".

"Of course, ordinary people in these countries will have more and more questions for their leaders," he said.

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HEADLINE	09/06 Curveball in Covid mutation nightmare
SOURCE	https://www.thedailybeast.com/new-covid-19-mutations-could-make-infected-people-sick-for-a-longer-time?ref=home
GIST	<p>When the pharmaceutical industry scrambled to develop the first COVID vaccines back in 2020, it made sense that developers focused on the part of the virus that allows it to grab onto and infect our cells: the spike proteins.</p> <p>The best vaccines contain a piece of the spike, or genetic data <i>about</i> the spike, either of which can spur an immune response. Not to be outdone, the virus has been mutating—with many of the changes occurring on that same spike.</p> <p>But other parts of the virus are changing, too. Now, for the first time, a team of scientists has scrutinized these changes—and voiced a warning.</p> <p>"With each major variant that has been identified, we are seeing mutations outside of [the] spike that we are trying to figure out," Matthew Frieman, a University of Maryland School of Medicine immunologist and microbiologist and lead author of the new study, told The Daily Beast.</p>

It's possible the virus is accumulating non-spike mutations in an attempt to gain some advantage over our collective immunity as the [COVID pandemic](#) grinds toward its fourth year. These new mutations might not make the virus more infectious the way spike mutations do, but they could be associated with *longer* infections.

If this trend continues—and there's no reason to believe it won't—we might eventually need new antiviral drugs and new vaccine formulations that aren't so specifically focused on the spike.

Vaccine developers weren't wrong to focus their initial efforts on the spike protein, Frieman and his co-authors explained in [their peer-reviewed study](#), which was published in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* and appeared online on Tuesday. "The spike protein is the immunodominant antigen," they wrote. In other words, it's the part of the virus most likely to produce a strong immune response.

Moreover, the major variants and subvariants of SARS-CoV-2—Delta then the various forms of Omicron including BA.4 and BA.5—have piled up mutations on the spike. As the spike evolves, the virus gets better and better at grabbing onto our cells despite the presence of antibodies.

That's one reason why the vaccines have been getting somewhat less effective, and we're seeing more and more breakthrough cases in vaccinated people. And it should come as no surprise that one of the leading contenders for the next dominant subvariant, [a spinoff of Omicron called BA.4.6](#), features a particularly worrying mutation on the spike called R346T.

But there have been hints that non-spike mutations are becoming a bigger factor, too. Geneticists noted that BA.5, [currently the dominant subvariant](#), doesn't just have mutations along its spike—it features changes all across its structure.

There had to be a reason for those mutations, Frieman explained. "Viruses don't do things by accident." Instead, they try out small changes, over and over, until some combination of changes helps it survive and spread. The resulting variant or subvariant then outcompetes other forms of the pathogen until it becomes dominant—and the likely basis for the next set of mutations.

To understand the reason for, and effects of, the non-spike mutations, Frieman's team cloned SARS-CoV-2 then started deleting the spike proteins and testing the resulting "deletion viruses" on mice, assessing how contagious the viruses were and how severe the infections were.

Their conclusion? "Mutations outside of [the] spike may be driving critical phenotypes of SARS-CoV-2 infection and disease." That is to say, changes beyond the spike are beginning to define the virus.

For now, it seems the spike and non-spike mutations are working together. The spike mutations make the virus steadily more contagious. "Mutations in [the] spike have been identified in every major variant that then out-competes the previous variant," Frieman explained.

Meanwhile, the non-spike mutations appear to prolong infection. This in turn gives the pathogen more time to mutate inside a particular person, and also spread to other people. "We hypothesize that this balance is critical for further evolution of SARS-CoV-2," Frieman's team wrote.

As the virus continues trying out mutations in order to stay ahead of our spike-focused immunity, it might further emphasize changes beyond the spike. BA.5, with its wide breadth of mutations, is a sign that's already happening.

Take this as an urgent call for further study of non-spike mutations. "As more variants emerge, we will identify additional mutations outside of [the] spike that contribute significantly to viral replication, transmission and pathogenesis," Frieman and his coauthors wrote.

Frieman said his goal is to scrutinize these non-spike mutations in order to “figure out what they do, how they do it [and] why they make the virus better at being a virus.” “Then we can use that information to make drugs,” including new antiviral therapies and vaccine formulations.

Speed matters. The Omicron variant and its rapid-fire subvariants, each coming just a couple months after the last, was a warning that our pharmaceutical research-and-development processes might be too slow. Note that the U.S. Food and Drug Administration just last week green-lit Omicron-specific vaccine boosters—a full 10 months after the initial Omicron variant first became dominant. “Omicron and its lineages”—another term for subvariants—“taught us a lesson for the need to be more agile in modifying the vaccine,” Ali Mokdad, a professor of health metrics sciences at the University of Washington Institute for Health, told The Daily Beast.

That problem could get worse if the rate of non-spike mutations accelerates. Our vaccine R&D is too slow even when it’s narrowly focused on the spike. What happens when it needs to broaden its scope to combat a virus that’s learning to mutate across its structure?

There’s another wrinkle. These accumulating mutations across the novel-coronavirus—on the spike and not on the spike—could start to mess with the polymerase chain-reaction tests we use to detect and track the virus.

PCR tests and sequencing use primers tailored for a certain range of viral characteristics. Too many mutations “can mess with the PCR test,” Niema Moshiri, a geneticist at the University of California-San Diego, told The Daily Beast.

Pay attention, but don’t panic. It’s really no surprise that SARS-CoV-2 is trying out mutations on different parts of the virus. That’s what viruses do—adapt. The trick for us, the novel-coronavirus’s host, is to adapt at least as quickly.

We did it before by rapidly developing vaccines and therapies targeting the most dangerous part of the virus. We can do it again as the virus finds new ways to evolve. It just takes political will... and money.

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HEADLINE	09/06 Report: NKorea weapons mass destruction
SOURCE	https://www.thedailybeast.com/north-koreas-weapons-of-mass-destruction-program-is-spiraling-under-america-s-nose?ref=scroll
GIST	<p>SEOUL—North Korea is producing chemical and bio-warfare weapons capable of inflicting as much death and destruction as the nuclear warheads that U.S. diplomats demand the North stop producing.</p> <p>That’s according to a lengthy study just released by the RAND Corporation and South Korea’s Asan Institute for the benefit of policy-makers in Washington and Seoul. The study says North Korea “has apparently amassed a substantial inventory of chemical weapons (reportedly 2,500 to 5,000 tons)” plus “an unknown quantity of biological weapons” and “a very active cyber hacker force.”</p> <p>Among key findings, the report accuses the North of “apparently testing chemical and biological weapons on people and carrying out some assassinations with chemical weapons,” notably that of Kim Jong Un’s older half-brother, Kim Jong Nam, by a VX chemical as he was about to fly from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in February 2017.</p> <p>In addition, it says, “North Korea has actively employed its cyber capabilities in peacetime to collect information, steal money, and cause damage”—most notoriously the hack of Sony Pictures in 2014 for <i>The Interview</i>, a wildly satirical comedy making wicked fun of Kim Jong Un.</p> <p>“In wartime,” the report warns, North Korea “would likely employ all of its weapons of mass destruction and cyber capabilities, including nuclear weapons, hoping to win the conflict and avoid suffering regime destruction.” The whole panoply of North Korean WMD (weapons of mass destruction), says the report,</p>

“would substantially transform the nature of a major war in Korea,” inflicting “immense damage” on South Korean and American “military capabilities and civil society.”

The North’s chemical weapons would probably be the deadliest in its inventory of weapons of mass destruction. “A kilogram of VX would be sufficient to kill or seriously injure 200,000 or so people,” says the report, but U.S. and South Korean forces “do not appear to be adequately prepared to counter the damage that would be done by North Korean CW [chemical weapon] use in a major war started by the North.”

Biological warfare would not be quite so deadly but would still rank high in the North Korean inventory. “Effective anthrax attacks would involve the use of far less agent than chemical attacks,” says the report, citing Kim Jong Un’s visit to a biopesticide plant as raising “serious concerns.” “In wartime, North Korea may well decide to use biological weapons,” says the report. “To achieve surprise, the North could carry out only selected bioweapon attacks before its main attack. After the main attack begins, the North would have great incentive to use bioweapons to attack key targets.

Just as devastating, but in a different way, is the potential for North Korea to wipe out anything run by electricity, including the South’s entire electrical system, by detonating a nuclear device as high as 500 kilometers in the atmosphere.

“These electrical fields are generated by the interaction of radiation from the nuclear explosion with molecules of air in the upper atmosphere and by the heated plasma of the weapon debris itself,” says the report. Electrical fields, known as the electromagnetic pulse (EMP), “can potentially damage electrical equipment and electronic devices on the ground.”

And then there’s “the threat of North Korea’s cyber capabilities.” Indeed, “no tool in North Korea’s arsenal has the reach and diversity of potential impact as its offensive cyber capabilities,” says the report. “At relatively low cost and in fairly short order,” it goes on, the North “can target adversaries overseas”

“In terms of lives lost, people injured, and economic losses,” says the report, “a North Korean cyberattack could potentially cause between zero and thousands of deaths.”

The report scolds the Americans for having failed to seriously punish North Korea for its nuclear and missile tests. The U.S. and South Korea, it said, must warn Kim Jong Un of “the potential consequences that would be imposed for those provocations.”

RAND, funded in large measure by Army and Air Force contracts, admonishes Washington policy-makers for their reluctance to go beyond outraged words and sanctions after North Korea’s multiple tests. In March, North Korea launched an intercontinental ballistic missile claimed to have been a Hwasong-17 capable of carrying a warhead to targets anywhere in the U.S.

As North Korea prepares for its seventh underground nuclear test, the report harshly belittles Washington’s wavering responses to North Korea’s aggressive threats against the U.S. and South Korea.

North Korea has not conducted an underground nuclear test since exploding what may have been a hydrogen bomb in September 2017. Kim and his sister, Yo Jong, however, have waxed increasingly vituperative since the South’s conservative President Yoon Suk-yeol authorized the first U.S.-South Korean military field exercises in five years. North Korea denounced the war games, which ended this week, as preparation for “invasion.”

The report states bluntly that typical warnings of “consequences cannot be idle threats.” South Korea and the U.S. “must have the will to execute them,” it states, “or future deterrence would be undercut.”

“Our clear objective is denuclearization,” Bruce Bennett, senior defense analyst at RAND, who masterminded the report and wrote half of it, told The Daily Beast. Bennett, who has written more than 100 reports for RAND, sought to temper some of its hardline conclusions.

“We really have to be realistic,” he said. “We don’t have a clear U.S. set of objectives.” Rather, “We have to put it in terms that at least the North Korean elites will consider,” he argued. “It’s in our interests to support a degree of individuality.”

The report, however, was largely critical—both of North Korea for its nuclear and missile tests and cyber program and of the U.S. and South Korea for their ineffective responses.

Bennett recommended “putting pressure on Kim Jong Un” by adopting a “carrot and stick” strategy. In response to another ICBM test, he suggested deluging the North with USBs dropped from drones so North Koreans could tune in to South Korean K-pop and dramas, for which Kim has ordered lengthy prison terms.

But he preferred not to appear overly hardline considering opposition to hawkish policies in South Korea and the U.S. “The reality,” he said, “is to develop a consensus, you have to be moderate.”

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HEADLINE	09/05 China locks down 65M; discourages travel
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/article/covid-health-travel-holidays-holiday-3edbe65118d87f91252e0f6be8afaf61
GIST	<p>BEIJING (AP) — China has locked down 65 million of its citizens under tough COVID-19 restrictions and is discouraging domestic travel during upcoming national holidays.</p> <p>Across the country, 33 cities including seven provincial capitals are under full or partial lockdown covering more than 65 million people, according to a tally published late Sunday by the Chinese business magazine Caixin.</p> <p>It said that outbreaks have been reported in 103 cities, the highest since the early days of the pandemic in early 2020.</p> <p>Despite a relatively low number of infections, authorities have adhered to a “zero-COVID” policy requiring lockdowns, quarantines and the confining of people suspected of being in close contact with any confirmed case.</p> <p>China recorded 1,552 new cases in the latest 24-hour period across a nation of 1.4 billion people, the National Health Commission reported Monday.</p> <p>Most of the 21 million people in the southwestern city of Chengdu are confined to their apartments or residential complexes, while in the eastern port city of Tianjin, classes have been moved online after 14 new cases were reported, all but two showing no symptoms.</p> <p>Chengdu lifted the lockdown for about 1 million people in Qionglai city and Xinjin district, two areas in its southwest. Three more rounds of mass testing are being held through Wednesday. and schools remain closed with all classes online.</p> <p>Sept. 10-12 is China’s mid-autumn festival, the country’s second-most important holiday after the Lunar New Year. The anti-virus measures have taken a major toll on the economy, travel and society in general, but China’s ruling Communist Party says they are necessary to prevent a wider spread of the virus, first detected in the central Chinese city of Wuhan in late 2019.</p> <p>The fear of being caught in a lockdown or sent to a quarantine facility for even being in proximity with a person who tested positive has severely constrained people’s work, socializing and travel habits.</p> <p>Since the outbreak began, China has placed tens of millions of people under lockdowns that have been strictly enforced, sometimes preventing residents from obtaining food, health care and basic necessities.</p>

	A more than five-week closure of Shanghai, China's largest city and key financial hub, in the spring upended the local economy, prompted protests and led to an exodus of foreign residents.
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HEADLINE	09/05 UN: 'famine at the door' for Somalia
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-africa-droughts-united-nations-famine-d217a4a61a25fcf5c5283afe6ba64e35
GIST	<p>MOGADISHU, Somalia (AP) — The United Nations says “famine is at the door” in Somalia with “concrete indications” famine will occur later this year in the southern Bay region. This falls just short of a formal famine declaration in Somalia as thousands are dying in a historic drought made worse by the effects of the war in Ukraine.</p> <p>U.N. humanitarian chief Martin Griffiths told reporters that he was “shocked to my core these past few days” on a visit to Somalia in which he witnessed starving babies too weak to cry.</p> <p>A formal famine declaration is rare and a warning that too little help has come too late. At least 1 million people in Somalia have been displaced by the worst drought in decades, driven by climate change, that also affects the wider Horn of Africa including Ethiopia and Kenya.</p> <p>Famine is the extreme lack of food and a significant death rate from outright starvation or malnutrition combined with diseases like cholera. A declaration means data shows more than a fifth of households have extreme food gaps, more than 30% of children are acutely malnourished and over two people out of 10,000 are dying every day.</p> <p>Russia's invasion of Ukraine has been described as a disaster for Somalia, which has suffered from a shortage of humanitarian aid as international donors focus on Europe. Somalia also sourced at least 90% of its wheat from Russia and Ukraine before the war and has been hit hard by scarcity and the sharp rise in food prices.</p> <p>“Ukraine has occupied the narrative,” Griffiths said.</p> <p>Hungry families in Somalia have been staggering for days or weeks on foot through parched terrain in search of assistance. Many bury family members along the way. Even when they reach camps outside urban areas, they find little or no help.</p> <p>At one camp outside the capital, Mogadishu, Fadumo Abdi Aliyow showed The Associated Press the graves of her two small sons next to their makeshift home. Disease had overwhelmed their weakened bodies. One was 4. The other was eight months old.</p> <p>“I wanted to die before them so they could bury me,” Aliyow said. Another resident of the camp of 1,800 families, Samey Adan Mohamed, said the last meal she and her eight children had was rice a day ago. Today they had only tea.</p> <p>Camps like theirs are ringed by death, bringing aid workers to tears. “I couldn't get out of my head the tiny mounds of ground marking children's graves,” UNICEF's deputy regional director Rania Dagash said last week. “I'm from this region and I've never seen it so bad.”</p> <p>A formal famine declaration would bring desperately needed funding. But “tragically, by the time a famine is declared, it's already too late,” the U.N. World Food Program has said.</p> <p>When famine was declared in parts of Somalia in 2011, the deaths of a quarter-million people were well underway.</p>

“This is not a repeat of the 2011 famine. It is much worse,” the U.N. humanitarian agency said last week. So far, at least 730 children have died in nutrition centers across Somalia, it said, and more than 213,000 people are at “imminent risk” of dying.

“You feel like you’re looking at the face of death,” Mercy Corps CEO Tjada McKenna told the AP after visiting the badly hit city of Baidoa. There is not enough therapeutic food to treat the acutely malnourished, said McKenna, who saw many young children and pregnant women. “For every one person I saw, imagine all the people who couldn’t get that far. And so many people were arriving each day.”

At the same time, aid funding has dropped more than 60% from the response to Somalia’s previous drought in 2017, USAID administrator Samantha Power said last week, noting a “degree of despair and devastation” not seen before in her career.

The Horn of Africa region has seen four straight failed rainy seasons for the first time in well over four decades. The upcoming rainy season is also expected to fail. That endangers an estimated 20 million people in one of the world’s most impoverished and turbulent regions.

“Sadly, our models show with a high degree of confidence that we are entering the fifth consecutive failed rainy season,” the director of the regional climate prediction center, Guleid Artan, has said. “In Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia, we are on the brink of an unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe.”

The rainfall in this year’s failed March-to-May season was the lowest in the last six decades, Artan told the AP. Next year’s March-to-May season doesn’t look good either, he said, worrying that “this could be the seven-year drought, the biblical one.”

Formal famine declarations are rare because data to meet the benchmarks often cannot be obtained because of conflict, poor infrastructure or politics. Governments can be wary of being associated with a term of such grim magnitude. Somalia’s recently elected president, however, appointed a drought envoy in one of his first acts in office, which Griffiths called “impressive.”

Because of the remote nature of Somalia’s drought, and with some hard-hit areas under the control of the al-Shabab extremist group which has been hostile to humanitarian efforts, no one knows how many people have died — or will in the months to come.

Hundreds of calls from across Somalia, including from al-Shabab-controlled areas, come in daily to the Somali-run Radio Ergo. Some say no aid is available in camps. Others say water sources have run dry or lament the loss of millions of livestock that are the foundation of their health and wealth.

“People don’t cry because they want their voice to be heard,” radio editor Leyla Mohamed told the AP. “But you can feel they are hurting, that they feel more than we can hear.”

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HEADLINE	09/04 Flash flooding hits northwest Georgia
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/article/floods-storms-georgia-weather-7c08df2c435c7d72fe165d4d2259fba0
GIST	<p>SUMMERVILLE, Ga. (AP) — Thunderstorms and heavy rain pounded parts of northwest Georgia on Sunday, sparking flash flooding in some areas. Local news reports showed roads under water and homeowners struggling to keep water out.</p> <p>Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp declared a state of emergency Sunday afternoon in Chattooga and Floyd Counties, directing all state resources to help with “preparation, response and recovery activities.” The National Weather Service said rainfall of up to one inch per hour was causing creeks, streams, roadways and urban areas to experience unusually high levels of water. Up to 12 inches of rain was estimated to have fallen in the area, according to Kemp’s executive order.</p>

	<p>“This is an extremely dangerous and life-threatening situation. Do not attempt to travel unless you are fleeing an area subject to flooding or under an evacuation order,” the service said.</p> <p>The service declared a “flash flood emergency” for Summerville, Lyerly and James H. Floyd State Park in Chattooga County. Floyd County — just to the south — was also under a flash flood warning.</p> <p>At 3:10 p.m., the service advised locals to avoid non-emergency travel as another round of emergency rainfall entered the area.</p> <p>The city of Summerville advised residents who use the city’s water utility services to boil water prior to drinking, cooking or preparing baby food due to flash flooding at the Raccoon Creek Filter plant.</p> <p>“Water should be boiled for at least one minute after reaching a rolling boil. Citizens should continue to boil their water until they are notified by their drinking water utility that the water system has been restored to full operation, and that the microbiological quality of the water in the distribution system is safe for human consumption,” the city said on its website.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/05 Shift: Mexicans not seen at busy crossings
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-covid-health-yuma-immigration-128e7440b334cc8fcbd3a629b78c3879
GIST	<p>YUMA, Ariz. (AP) — As hundreds of migrants line up along an Arizona border wall around 4 a.m., agents try to separate them into groups by nationality.</p> <p>“Anyone from Russia or Bangladesh? I need somebody else from Russia here,” an agent shouts and then says quietly, almost to himself, “These are Romanian.”</p> <p>It’s a routine task for the Border Patrol in the wee hours in this flat expanse of desert where the wall ends. Migrants from at least 115 countries have been stopped here in the last year, but that may be less striking than what’s missing: Mexicans are virtually absent.</p> <p>Instead, families from Venezuela, Colombia, Haiti, Cuba, Brazil, India and dozens of other countries arrive in Yuma after wading through the knee-deep Colorado River. Their presence reflects how a pandemic-era rule still shapes the journeys of many migrants, even though much of the U.S. has moved on from COVID-19.</p> <p>The changing demographics mark a dramatic shift away from the recent past, when migrants were predominantly from Mexico and Central America’s Northern Triangle countries — Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador. That’s especially clear at some of the busiest crossings, like Yuma and Eagle Pass, Texas, near where several people died in recent days while trying to cross the Rio Grande.</p> <p>Mexicans still cross elsewhere but often try to elude capture because they are likely to be expelled under a pandemic rule that denies them a chance to seek asylum.</p> <p>Mexicans still account for 7 of every 10 encounters in the Border Patrol’s Tucson, Arizona, sector, where smugglers order them to walk at night with black-painted water jugs, camouflage backpacks and boots with carpeted soles to avoid leaving tracks in the sand, said John Modlin, the sector chief.</p> <p>“Incredibly different tale of two borders, even though they’re within the same state,” Modlin said.</p> <p>Migrants who are not from Mexico and the Northern Triangle accounted for 41% of stops on the border from October through July, up from only 12% three years earlier, according to government data.</p>

In Yuma, they wear sandals and carry shopping bags stuffed with belongings over their shoulders. Some carry toddlers. The migrants typically walk a short distance through tribal lands and surrender to agents, expecting to be released to pursue their immigration cases.

Meanwhile, Mexicans made up 35% of all border encounters from October through July, higher than three years ago but well below the 85% reported in 2011 and the 95% at the turn of the century.

In theory, the rule that denies migrants the right to seek asylum on grounds of preventing spread of COVID-19 applies to all nationalities. But in practice, Title 42 is enforced largely for migrants who are accepted by Mexico, which agreed to take in people expelled from Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador, as well as its own citizens.

It is difficult for the U.S. to send others to their home countries due to costs, strained diplomatic relations and other considerations.

“The challenge is what Mexico can accept,” Modlin said. “That’s always going to be a limiting factor.”

In Yuma, Title 42 has become almost nonexistent, with the pandemic rule being applied in only 192 of 24,424 stops in July — less than 1%. In Tucson, it was used in 71% of stops. A court order has kept Title 42 in place indefinitely.

It is unclear why routes are so divergent. U.S. officials believe inhospitable mountains and canyons near Tucson favor people trying to escape detection, while the ease of crossing in places like Yuma makes those paths better suited for families seeking to surrender.

“What we know with absolute certainty is that the smuggling organizations control the flow,” Modlin said. “They decide who goes where and when they go to the point. It’s almost like air traffic control of moving people around.”

In Yuma, groups of up to about two dozen migrants are dropped off by bus or car on a deserted Mexican highway and then begin arriving shortly after midnight at the edge of the imposing wall built during Donald Trump’s presidency.

If English and Spanish fail, agents use Google Translate to question them under generator-powered lights, take photos and load them onto buses.

Migrants arrive over several hours on different paths, sparking concern among agents that smugglers may be trying to confuse them to sneak some through undetected.

One recent morning, six Russians said they flew from Istanbul to Tijuana, Mexico, with a stop in Cancun, and hired a driver to take them four hours to the deserted highway where they crossed.

A 26-year-old man who flew from his home in Peru to Tijuana said the most difficult part of the journey was the anxiety about whether he’d make it to his destination in New Jersey.

Nelson Munera, 40, said he, his wife and their 17-year-old son got off a bus on the highway and crossed to Yuma because fellow Colombians had taken the same route.

Lazaro Lopez, who came with his 9-year-old son from Cuba by flying to Nicaragua and crossing Mexico over land, chose Yuma because that’s where his smuggler guided him.

“An opportunity presented itself,” said Lopez, 48.

The Border Patrol drops off hundreds of migrants each day at the Regional Center for Border Health, a clinic near Yuma that charts six buses daily to Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport. Migrants are released on humanitarian parole or with a notice to appear in immigration court.

	<p>The clinic began the airport shuttles for migrants in February 2021 and recently added buses to Washington, paid for by the state of Arizona.</p> <p>“We have seen families from over 140 countries,” said Amanda Aguirre, the health-care provider’s chief executive officer. “We haven’t seen one from Mexico, not through our processing.”</p> <p>The shift is also evident on the Mexican side of the border.</p> <p>The Don Chon migrant shelter in nearby San Luis Rio Colorado fills many of its roughly 50 beds with Central Americans who were expelled under Title 42.</p> <p>Kelvin Zambrano, 33, who arrived in a large group of Hondurans, said he fled threats of extortion and gang violence. Border Patrol agents wouldn’t let him share his story, he said.</p> <p>“I don’t know why, but they don’t want Hondurans,” he said.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/05 Tensions remain at Ukraine nuclear plant
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-donetsk-3b936a8f1c4d32bb118a5cd2dac264bb
GIST	<p>KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Tension still gripped Europe’s largest nuclear plant Monday, a day before U.N. inspectors were due to report on their efforts to avert a potential disaster at the Ukrainian site that has been engulfed by Russia’s war on its neighbor.</p> <p>The Russian military accused Ukrainian forces of staging “provocations” at the Zaporizhzhia plant, which lies within a Russian-installed administrative area.</p> <p>Russia’s Defense Ministry claimed that Kyiv’s forces on Sunday targeted the territory of the plant with a drone, which it said Russian troops were able to shoot down.</p> <p>The ministry said Ukrainian troops also shelled the adjacent city of Enerhodar twice overnight.</p> <p>The two sides have traded accusations about endangering the plant, which the Kremlin’s forces have held since early March. The plant’s Ukrainian staff continue to operate it.</p> <p>In a perilous mission, experts with the International Atomic Energy Agency traveled through the war zone to reach the plant last week.</p> <p>Four of six U.N. nuclear agency inspectors have completed their work and left the site, Energoatom, Ukraine’s state nuclear power plant operator, said Monday.</p> <p>Two of the experts are expected to stay at the plant on a permanent basis, Energoatom said.</p> <p>The U.N. inspectors are scheduled to brief the Security Council on Tuesday about what they found out on their visit.</p> <p>The plant is largely crippled, amid a grinding war that has clobbered energy markets.</p> <p>A prominent Ukrainian nuclear expert said Monday that only a demilitarized zone of at least 10 kilometers (6 miles) around the plant could ensure its safety.</p> <p>Hryhoriy Plachkov, Ukraine’s former head of nuclear inspections, said he also feared for the morale and mental state of his countrymen working there.</p>

Elsewhere, the fighting raged on for a seventh month, with Ukraine's presidential office saying Monday at least four civilians were killed and seven others were wounded by Russian shelling in the previous 24 hours across several regions of Ukraine.

Most of the casualties were in the eastern Donetsk region, where three people were killed and four were wounded. A large chunk of Donetsk is held by Russian-allied separatists.

In the Kharkiv region, further north, three people were wounded when a rocket hit a residential building, the president's office said.

Russian shells struck more than a dozen residential buildings along with a school, cafes and stores, Ukraine said.

Meanwhile, a counteroffensive by Ukrainian forces "is making verifiable progress in the south and the east" of the country, the Washington-based Institute for the Study of War said.

"The pace of the counteroffensive will likely change dramatically from day to day as Ukrainian forces work to starve the Russians of necessary supplies, disrupt their command and control, and weaken their morale even as counteroffensive ground assaults continue," the institute said late Sunday.

It predicted that Russian forces will launch "fierce artillery and air attacks" against the advancing Ukrainian troops and on any areas they liberate.

Amid increased Ukrainian strikes on the occupied Kherson region, Russian-installed authorities there said that for security reasons they were putting on hold their plans for a local referendum on whether the region should formally become part of Russia.

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HEADLINE	09/04 OD crisis sweeping Fort Bragg
SOURCE	https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-features/inside-the-overdose-crisis-sweeping-fort-bragg-1396298/
GIST	<p>RACHEAL BOWMAN, A single mother from Aberdeen, Maryland, was finishing up her shift as a postal worker the afternoon of June 11, 2021, when she got a worrisome call from her son's girlfriend. Her son, Matthew Disney, a 20-year-old soldier stationed at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, wasn't answering his phone. Neither his girlfriend nor his mom nor his little sisters could reach him. "It was very unlike him," Bowman says. "Matthew's sister has been incredibly ill her whole life" with a rare intestinal disorder. "When she calls, he answers."</p> <p>Her son was the child she never had to worry about, Bowman tells <i>Rolling Stone</i>. As a boy, he was well-behaved and supportive of his mom, who had been through a nasty divorce and struggled financially. He was "upbeat and passionate" about baseball, football, and video games. And for as long as she could remember, he'd had it in his head to join the military. "He had the very strong belief that if you were able-bodied, you should serve your country," Bowman says. "Whether you like your president or not. He could tell you all about other countries where it was mandatory."</p> <p>Disney considered all the service branches, and decided on the U.S. Army. He enlisted after high school, trained as a radar operator and, in March 2020, was assigned to an airborne artillery regiment at Fort Bragg. He had done nine parachute jumps, and the last time he spoke to his mom, he was excited to do his 10th. But that Friday in June, he had the day off. "Hours were going by and he was not responding to any of us," Bowman says. "This was extremely out of character."</p> <p>Bowman and her daughters called up some of Disney's friends, fellow soldiers at Fort Bragg, and they alerted the fire guard on duty, she says, who located surveillance footage of Disney and another radarman, Spc. Joshua Diamond, entering the barracks at 11 the night before. But when they knocked on Diamond's locked door, no one answered. Neither the fire guard nor the military police would open Diamond's door</p>

by force, because 24 hours hadn't elapsed, meaning he and Disney couldn't be considered missing persons. "Even though there were family members saying something is wrong," Bowman says, "they would not open the locked door."

Bowman was frantic. She contacted a family friend in Maryland, a colonel in the Army, and he made some calls that evidently spurred the military police into action. They called Bowman and asked her permission to track her son's phone. "And then it was crickets," she says. "Everything went silent. The second I gave my permission to ping his phone, the MPs wouldn't talk to us."

The Army follows a strict procedure for notifying the next of kin of casualties, and always sends a uniformed officer to deliver the bad news in person. But around midnight, Disney's sister received an anonymous call. Bowman was standing on the front porch. "I just heard her scream," she says. "And I went inside, and she was on the kitchen floor with Matt's girlfriend, screaming 'This isn't fucking funny. Who the fuck are you? What kind of sick joke is this?'"

The caller would only tell them that Disney was "no longer alive." Bowman placed phone call after desperate phone call and, at two in the morning, got through to her son's battalion commander. He confirmed that Disney had been found in Diamond's room, lifeless. "I'm so sorry," she remembers him saying. "He was a good kid." But he wouldn't tell her what had happened, only that Disney "didn't do anything to hurt himself."

On top of the shock and grief of learning that her only son was dead, Bowman was confused. If it wasn't suicide, then what had happened to Matthew? All she could think was that the other soldier, Diamond, must have done something to harm him.

That was not the case. In fact, Diamond was dead, too. His body had been found slumped over Disney's on the floor, almost as if in an embrace. And many Fort Bragg soldiers have died recently under similar circumstances — quietly, in their barracks, in their bunks, in a parked car, or somewhere off-post, from no outwardly apparent cause. According to a set of casualty reports obtained by Rolling Stone through the Freedom of Information Act, at least 14 — and as many as 30 — Fort Bragg soldiers have died in this way since the start of 2020. Yet there has been no acknowledgment from the Army or reporting in the national press on any aspect of this phenomenon, nor word one from any member of Congress. Only the families of the victims have been informed — discreetly, and in private.

Disney's memorial service was in July. "We were getting ready to go into the chapel," Bowman says, and Maj. Gen. Chris Donahue, the commander of the 82nd Airborne Division, came into the room and personally informed her that the results of a toxicology report were in. The cause of death was acute fentanyl intoxication.

Donahue, who has since been promoted to lieutenant general, did not respond to a request for comment sent to Fort Bragg. But Rolling Stone obtained Disney's Defense Department Form 1300, a "report of casualty," which essentially functions as a military death certificate. It confirms that he died accidentally from an overdose of fentanyl.

That only compounded Bowman's confusion. "My son was not a drug user," she insists. Under no circumstances would he have wittingly ingested fentanyl. Addiction ran in the family, and Disney's little sister had endured dozens of surgeries, and periodically relied on or had to withdraw from opioids, so he was well aware of the risks they entailed. "Fentanyl, ketamine, Narcan, laudanum, Percocet, morphine," Bowman says. "These are drugs that we talked about on a very regular basis."

However, one conversation she never had with her kids was about counterfeit pills. Military investigators informed her that Disney had ingested an imitation Percocet, a prescription painkiller. "I had never in my life heard of a fake Percocet that looked legit from a pharmacy," she says, "until my son took one and it killed him."

A STAGGERING TOTAL of 109 soldiers assigned to Fort Bragg, active and reserve, lost their lives in 2020 and 2021, casualty reports obtained through the Freedom of Information Act show. Only four of the deaths occurred in overseas combat operations. All the rest took place stateside. Fewer than 20 were from natural causes. All the rest were preventable. This is a seemingly unprecedented wave of fatalities on a modern U.S. military installation.

Forty-one Fort Bragg soldiers took their own lives in 2020 and 2021, making suicide the leading cause of death. A spokesman for the Army, Matthew Leonard, confirmed that no other base has ever recorded a higher two-year suicide toll. There were also a shocking number of incidents of soldier-on-soldier violence. Since mid-2020, 11 Fort Bragg soldiers have been murdered or charged with murder, including one murder-suicide. Five Fort Bragg soldiers were shot to death, and one was beheaded. Rolling Stone has previously reported on the rash of violent crime at Fort Bragg and investigated several of the unsolved murders. The newly obtained documents shed light on another kind of killer stalking soldiers and go a long way toward explaining the record-setting death toll.

Fourteen of the casualty reports state explicitly that the soldier died from a drug overdose. Eleven of these identify fentanyl as the fatal agent. In five other cases, the soldier died at a young age from acute renal or liver failure, or from a heart attack — medical events that young people typically don't experience, but that can be brought on by heavy drug abuse, complications from mixing drugs, or organ damage from the use of banned steroids. In addition, there were two cases where soldiers died from “undetermined” causes after being found unresponsive, for a total of 21 probable drug-related deaths in the two years ending December 2021. By comparison, there were about 13 illness deaths at Fort Bragg over the same period, 14 car and motorcycle crashes, and three fatal training accidents. Putting aside instances of self-harm, then, accidental overdose is the leading cause of death at Fort Bragg.

Rolling Stone obtained the casualty reports from the U.S. Army Human Resources Command, not Fort Bragg, where officials have been not at all forthcoming. A spokesman for the base — a colonel — said that the number of deaths in 2020 was 45. According to the reports, it was 56. Another spokesman, a captain, stated in writing that the 2021 death toll was 38. In fact, it was 53. The same captain also told Rolling Stone that the number of opioid overdoses last year was four. In reality, it was at least six, and probably 11, if you count all of the deaths that were likely drug related. When confronted with these facts, Fort Bragg officials deflect blame and point to trends in the general population. “We do not see this as an isolated issue that only plagues Fort Bragg,” Capt. Matt Visser wrote in an email. He pointed to the proximity of Interstate 95 — the highway from Miami to New York, a notorious drug-trafficking corridor — which “increases the accessibility of substances” to Fort Bragg soldiers.

In most cases, there is no announcement when a soldier OD's. For instance, on Feb. 23, 2020, Spc. Christopher Jenkins, a 22-year-old intelligence analyst, died of “fentanyl and dextromethorphan intoxication,” according to his casualty report. Though it occurred on Fort Bragg, there was no press release, and no news reports of the death of this active-duty soldier, who was from West Palm Beach, Florida. No obituary was published, and Jenkins left no trace on the internet.

Other Fort Bragg soldiers who died of an overdose with no public notice in 2020 and 2021 include Spc. Christhiam Gonzalez-Pineda, a helicopter repairman originally from Honduras who died from the acute effects of unspecified “illegal substances,” per his casualty report; Pfc. Anthony Savala, an infantryman from California who died from a cocktail of Benadryl, benzodiazepines, and fentanyl; Spc. Zachary Bracken, a Green Beret candidate from Maryland who died from a combination of alcohol and fentanyl; Sgt. 1st Class Michael Tardie, an infantryman from Arizona who died from the same mixture; Sgt. David Mazzullo, a signals-intelligence analyst from New York who died from an overdose of heroin and fentanyl; and Spc. Matthew Meadows, a parachute rigger from Texas who died from fentanyl alone. None of these deaths were made public.

In other cases, for reasons that aren't clear, Fort Bragg did make an announcement when a soldier died of an overdose, but in a vague and euphemistic way that made no mention of drugs. For example, a Special Forces candidate from Ohio named Jamie Boger was found “unresponsive in his barracks,” according to a March 16, 2020, press release; his casualty report shows that he died of cocaine and fentanyl intoxication.

Likewise, on Nov. 11, 2020, Spc. Terrance Salazar, an infantryman from Texas, was found “unresponsive in his room”; he died from mixing alcohol and cough syrup. Pfc. Mikel Rubino, an infantryman from California, was “found unresponsive in his barracks room” on Aug. 13, 2021; he died from a fentanyl overdose, according to his casualty report. Six weeks later, an artillery spotter from Texas was found “unresponsive” in his off-post housing; his cause of death remains pending determination.

The artillery spotter died in the first week of October 2021, a month during which Fort Bragg soldiers were losing their lives at the incredible rate of one every three days. The local newspaper, The Fayetteville Observer, picked up on the trend of soldiers dying from unexplained causes and published an article on Oct. 30 that tied together the cases of “six soldiers found dead in barracks on post.” After that, the public-affairs office seems to have quit announcing overdose deaths altogether. The incidents of apparently healthy young men turning up “unresponsive” stopped.

Nonetheless, another 21 Fort Bragg soldiers died over the subsequent five months — one from a confirmed overdose, and nine others from causes pending determination. The most recent soldier to turn up lifeless on Fort Bragg from causes that the Army can’t or won’t explain was Maj. Eric Ewoldsen, on March 25, 2022. Ewoldsen was not just any soldier. According to multiple sources, he was an officer on Delta Force, a top-secret manhunting unit said to be the most selective organization in the entire Department of Defense. It’s a mystery how Ewoldsen, a 38-year-old fitness fanatic, ended up slumped over in a parked vehicle somewhere on Fort Bragg, but sources close to his family say that no foul play was involved. “His death is not a result of malpractice or anything nefarious,” Ewoldsen’s former JSOC teammate Cody McBride wrote in an email.

“All these deaths are happening in the same way, and no one is talking about it,” says Racheal Bowman, Disney’s mom. “It’s all very secretive. It’s all swept under the rug.” She adds, “This is obviously a problem. How is it that nobody knows about it?”

MANY PEOPLE ASSUME that because soldiers are regularly drug-tested they can’t use illicit substances. This assumption is mistaken. The Army has long taken a more lackadaisical attitude toward drug use than some might expect. Many years ago, when I enlisted, my recruiter asked me not whether I smoked marijuana but rather, “When was the last time?” He then showed me a minifridge in his office that was full of detox drinks that he said would allow me to pass a urinalysis. Later, when my unit was about to deploy to Iraq, a sergeant in my platoon tested positive for cocaine. Nothing happened to him.

To an even greater extent than Americans in general, U.S. soldiers are overworked, stressed out, and chronically deprived of sleep. To cope with the demands of their physically and emotionally taxing jobs, they turn to a whole range of potent substances, legal and illegal, whether it’s a hyper-caffeinated energy drink to boost a predawn workout, an off-duty joint to ease a chronic injury, steroids to obtain an edge in selection for an elite unit, or a line of cocaine in the bathroom of a bar after a deployment. Hard-drug use is increasingly apparent in the Special Forces. A group of Navy SEAL whistleblowers told CBS News that the military’s drug-testing protocols are “a joke.” In many cases, there’s no institutional incentive for commanders to punish soldiers for simple possession or use. It’s an offense best dealt with quietly and administratively. But fentanyl has changed the calculus.

Fentanyl overdose is now the leading cause of death among American adults under the age of 45. The cheaply manufactured, perniciously addictive, superpotent nightmare drug has contaminated the whole range of illicit narcotics in the United States. People who think they’re taking cocaine, Xanax, hydrocodone, or some other relatively softer substance may end up ingesting it unknowingly. Indeed, many of these deaths should not be considered overdoses at all, but rather accidental poisonings.

“He definitely didn’t know it was fentanyl, that’s for certain,” says a close friend of Spc. Joshua Diamond, the radarman whose room Disney was found dead in. “Based off of text messages they found on his phone, he purchased a Percocet.”

Or so he thought. It's not clear whether Diamond and Disney split one pill or took one each. Their families learned from investigators that Diamond had purchased the pill or pills from a fellow soldier in the 82nd Airborne, who got them off the dark web.

Diamond grew up in Taunton, Massachusetts, a small town south of Boston. According to the friend (who wanted to remain anonymous because he works in law enforcement), Diamond did "backbreaking jobs" in his twenties, "roadwork," and joined the Army at the age of 34 in search of "structure in his life." He wanted "something he could be proud of," the friend says, "a stable career."

The region of Massachusetts where he and Diamond grew up together is "riddled with overdose deaths," he says, but the friend is vague about Diamond's past use of drugs. "I don't want to sit here and say he was a saint and a choirboy," he says. "Anything that he was involved in, it wasn't a lifestyle."

The last time he saw Diamond, in May 2021, he had recently redeployed from Iraq. "His life was in good shape," the friend says. "He was planning to ask his girlfriend to marry him. He was doing great. That's why it's so devastating. I thought he was going to learn a craft and be proud of himself. Instead, he got put in a pine box."

THE DIRECTOR OF the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), Dr. Nora Volkow, tells Rolling Stone that the number of opioid overdose deaths in the United States has been rising relentlessly for the past two decades. At first the problem was prescription pills, then heroin. She compares the emergence of fentanyl around 2015 or 2016 to the Omicron variant of Covid-19. "It just took hold everywhere," she says.

Fentanyl is a classic example of the reliable tendency, well-known to economists, of drug and alcohol prohibitions to produce new substances that are ever-more potent, compact, cheap to manufacture, and toxic to users. Unlike heroin, fentanyl can be synthesized in a lab with no need to grow poppy plants. It is so highly concentrated that it can be distributed efficiently through the mail. "It is more powerful, more addictive, more rewarding," Volkow says, "and much more likely to result in an overdose."

On average, she says, members of the military are less likely to die of an opioid overdose than the general population, in large part because of entry-level screening that excludes people with preexisting substance-use disorders. However, recent studies show a "fast and dramatic" rise in the absolute number of overdose deaths among active-duty military men, she says. "They have been going up, just like in the whole United States." She adds that the military medical system has been "very proactive" in its response, "particularly in the distribution of Naloxone."

In addition to casualty reports from Fort Bragg, Rolling Stone obtained the casualty reports for every U.S. soldier, Army-wide, who died in 2021. The documents show that of 505 total deaths, 33 were confirmed overdoses. That alone would make overdose a leading cause of death among American soldiers, behind suicide, illness, and accidents, but well in excess of homicides and combat fatalities. However, just like at Fort Bragg, there are a substantial number of deaths from what the Army has labeled "undetermined" causes. If deemed overdoses, these would significantly increase the total. These 27 cases "pending determination" include a soldier who was found "unresponsive" in his barracks in Vicenza, Italy; three soldiers stationed in Alaska who were found dead over the winter, two at home and one in a vehicle; another Alaska-based soldier who died down in California from what the Los Angeles County Medical Examiner determined was a fentanyl overdose; and the deaths of two Special Forces soldiers, one in El Salvador and one in Long Island, New York, from causes the Army hasn't determined.

Whatever the true total of soldier overdoses, it's clear that a lopsided percentage of them take place at Fort Bragg, which is distinct from most other bases in that it's overwhelmingly populated by male soldiers in combat-arms units. It is a base full of trigger pullers, where many have done multiple deployments to Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, and elsewhere. Most recently, it was the 82nd that evacuated the Kabul airport when the U.S. withdrew. Nolkow says that while soldiers are less likely than civilians, on average, to develop a drug habit, "the psychological distress of being deployed, seeing people die, and being in a war zone" makes combat veterans "more vulnerable to drug taking and very heavy drinking as they try to auto-medicate the intense anxiety associated with PTSD."

According to medical experts, alcohol and drug misuse are second only to depression and other mood disorders as predictors of suicidal behavior. Trauma feeds into both suicides and overdoses, which oftentimes can be hard for medical examiners to tell apart.

The surge in both at Fort Bragg coincided with the demoralizing end of the war in Afghanistan, in which the Special Forces and the 82nd Airborne played so prominent a role. That dispiriting defeat, after 20 years of hard fighting against a determined enemy, no doubt contributes to the malaise driving soldiers to drug themselves with opioids and other toxic narcotics. There are historical parallels here to the widespread use of heroin by American soldiers at the tail end of the Vietnam War. Military leaders will deny it and say that morale is high, but there is a palpable sense of purposelessness and disillusionment hanging over bases like Fort Bragg. “It’s a depressing place,” says a young soldier in the 82nd who was having breakfast at the nearby McDonald’s recently. “Everyone hates it.”

Despite the lack of reporting on this issue, Fort Bragg knows it has a problem. In a statement to Rolling Stone, a spokesman said that the base had taken a number of new measures recently to decrease the distribution of drugs on-post. They had stepped up police presence at the gates, increased background checks on visitors, deployed more drug-sniffing dogs, and raised the frequency of random urinalysis testing, Capt. Visser wrote. Nevertheless, drug-related crime increased a full 100 percent in fiscal year 2021, an officer in the provost marshal’s office admitted to the local ABC affiliate. According to data obtained by Rolling Stone, no fewer than 232 Fort Bragg soldiers were charged last year under the Uniform Code of Military Justice with possession, use, or distribution of a controlled substance, including an incident in which an MP was accused of moonlighting as a drug dealer, and selling Oxycodone from his cop car. And 2021 saw a continuation of a trend that Rolling Stone has previously reported on: Green Berets and other elite soldiers getting into the drug game.

Last year, I wrote about the case of Billy Lavigne, a dope-dealing Delta Force operator found murdered in the woods outside of Fort Bragg in December 2020. Two sources who knew Lavigne now say that they believe he was working with the North Carolina operation of a Mexican drug-trafficking cartel.

“That man worked for the cartel,” says a tattoo artist who saw Lavigne in November 2020, shortly before he was found shot to death in the back of his own truck. “He was transporting crystal meth. He was driving with people that were coming back from their pickup location, and collecting money if somebody was being a problem and not wanting to pay.” She adds, “I rode with him a couple of times to Atlanta, where they were doing the cooking.” In her view, “it had to have been the cartel that killed him.”

Lavigne was out of his mind on drugs and committed a string of irrational crimes from 2018 to 2020, including the murder of his best friend, a fellow Green Beret. Though the sheriff and DA’s office let him off the hook every time in an apparent favor to Delta Force, the cartel didn’t appreciate him drawing so much attention, the tattoo artist says. “It’s something called green-lighted,” she explains. “It means you’re going to be killed.”

Lavigne’s murder remains unsolved. “My speculation is he got involved with the cartels and was probably selling or moving stuff,” says James Reese, a retired Delta Force lieutenant colonel who knew Lavigne personally and worked with him in Iraq. “He probably started owing them money and couldn’t pay. Then the sandman came for Billy.”

Also unsolved is the cryptic case of Enrique Roman Martinez, the young Fort Bragg soldier from Chino, California, who was beheaded during a May 2020 camping trip with six of his comrades from the 82nd. Rolling Stone recently obtained CID’s entire 1,526-page investigative file on the suspected murder case, which makes clear that LSD played a key role in what went down. The partially redacted documents, including the campers’ handwritten statements, paint a picture of an outing to the beach that devolved into a bad psychedelic trip, then a horror movie, but never quite make clear who the culprits were that chopped off Martinez’s head.

More recently, in May 2021, a master sergeant in the 82nd named Martin Acevedo III was arrested in a joint raid by the Department of Homeland Security and the Cumberland County Sheriff's Office. The feds seized more than two kilos of coke, several firearms, and \$99,808 in cash from his house on Green Heron Drive, and hit him with heavy-duty trafficking charges. Acevedo pleaded guilty and is scheduled to be sentenced in August 2022.

Four months after Acevedo's arrest, a Special Forces staff sergeant named David Rankine was charged with drug trafficking for importing "diverse amounts of anabolic steroids" into the United States. Rankine was also charged with cocaine use, child endangerment for allegedly snorting and injecting drugs in front of a minor, as well as sexual assault for forcing a woman to perform oral sex on him at gunpoint. He pleaded guilty to all but the child-endangerment charge and was sentenced to five years in prison.

To better understand the psychology of soldiers — particularly elite soldiers — who turn to drug trafficking, I wrote to Master Sgt. Daniel Gould, a Green Beret who won a Silver Star for valor in Afghanistan, only to be convicted in 2019 of conspiring to import a large quantity of cocaine into the U.S. from Colombia. "I had a great paycheck, and I didn't need to do what I did," Gould wrote back in a letter from federal prison, where he is serving a nine-year sentence. Money was part of what motivated him, he explained, but he mostly did it for the challenge, out of boredom, and because he'd lost touch with right and wrong due to the moral gray zone Special Forces soldiers so often inhabit: "The opportunity was there, and I took the risk."

Gould's scheme might have succeeded had it not been for a captain named Stephen Murga. Murga, an infantry officer assigned to the DEA station in Bogotá, got suspicious when Gould asked him to load a pair of punching bags onto a C-130 bound for Florida, and to not stop by the U.S. embassy on the way to the airfield. "I knew something was going on," Murga tells Rolling Stone. "Knowing Dan, I wouldn't put anything past him." Murga tipped off the DEA, and Gould was forced to turn himself in.

Gould was an "adrenaline junkie" and a "war hero brought down by his ego," in Murga's estimation. "His Silver Star citation is the key to his persona. He was a Special Forces team leader. They were ambushed by the Taliban. He assaulted the ambush line, and killed, like, 14 of them."

The adulation and praise that Gould received as a result made him feel as though he was untouchable, Murga says. He adds that it's a "character arc" common to a lot of elite soldiers, in his experience. "I worked with a lot of SF operators over the past five years," he says. "I don't think he was motivated by money, but by danger and excitement. He thought he could get away with it."

ALTHOUGH THE PRESIDENT is commander in chief, Congress has broad authority to fund, organize, manage, and regulate the military, and when necessary, to reform it. This was apparent in 2020, when the House Armed Services Committee created an independent review board to assess the leadership failures that led to 28 soldier deaths at Fort Hood, Texas, in the span of a single year. At the conclusion of that damning investigation, the Pentagon sacked nearly the entire chain of command at Fort Hood.

Twice as many soldiers died at Fort Bragg for two years running, and across the board, there were more incidents of homicide, suicide, and drug overdose. Sexual assault is also a major problem at Fort Bragg, as Rolling Stone has previously reported. Yet Congress has done absolutely nothing about it.

Fort Bragg is left to police itself, but there are serious questions about the sufficiency of the military justice system to deal with systemic drug crimes and substance abuse. When a soldier dies from an overdose or an accidental drug poisoning, it's not always obvious who should be held responsible, or to what degree.

Friends of Disney's told his mom the name of the soldier suspected of selling the deadly fake Percocet to Diamond. That soldier was recently convicted of seven counts of drug distribution, busted down to private, dishonorably discharged, and sentenced to a year in prison. Bowman says she can't understand why he wasn't charged for an offense like manslaughter. "He's not in trouble for the deaths that he caused,

because he didn't know what he bought," she says, incredulously. "Why are you not responsible for the risk that you just took?"

It is understandable that Bowman would want to see heavier punishment. "There's zero accountability," she says. "That's why these kids are dying."

But it's not at all clear that greater retributive justice would do anything to alleviate the drug crisis on Fort Bragg, or in the Army more generally. Even if the military jailed dealers for life, it would do nothing to bring back Disney and Diamond, or any of the others who have succumbed to overdoses recently. Nor would increased law enforcement do much to deter other soldiers from distributing drugs on-post, in all likelihood. Get-tough measures on part of police and prosecutors have done nothing to reduce the demand for narcotics, and demand will always beget supply. The 50-year history of the failed War on Drugs has taught nothing if not that.

Perhaps there is no greater symbol of our definitive loss in that interminable war than Fort Bragg itself. From this flagship base, the beating heart of the U.S. special-operations complex, the military apparatus behind the global War on Drugs deploys to the far corners of the world. Green Berets train security forces in countries like Colombia, El Salvador, and Honduras. Delta Force reportedly took part in the anti-cartel operations that killed Pablo Escobar and captured El Chapo Guzmán. Yet drive down Bragg Boulevard into the Bonnie Doone neighborhood of Fayetteville, and in between the storage facilities, mobile-home dealerships, and tattoo parlors, you will find roach motels full of addicts, indigent veterans camped out beneath bridges, and strung-out junkies hanging around boarded-up trap houses. The dismal tide of synthetic opioids and amphetamines has penetrated Fort Bragg's high-security gates, permeated through to the lowliest privates' barracks, and caused at least a dozen overdose deaths in just the last year. These dead soldiers, who far outnumber combat casualties, are clearer proof of the United States' unequivocal defeat in its longest-running international military campaign than a white flag run up over the main parade field. As the old saying goes: The War on Drugs is over — drugs won.

ON THE MORNING of Feb. 16, 2021, Andrea Bracken and her family gathered together at Arlington National Cemetery to inurn the ashes of her son Zachary. His death two months earlier had come as a complete shock to her and her husband. Spc. Zachary Bracken, a Special Forces candidate at Fort Bragg, was just 24. He had been an athlete in high school and a football player his freshman year of college, but dropped out in hopes of becoming a Green Beret. "He went into the Army with a purpose," Andrea says. "He wanted to go into Special Forces. He wanted to be a combat medic."

Her son's story is not atypical. He had dabbled in drugs before, including marijuana and Ecstasy. "He tried things," Andrea says. "Zach was very transparent." But he never would have chosen to take fentanyl, she believes. "My son was an EMT already," she says. "He knows what drugs are what."

Bracken is one of three Green Beret trainees, or soldiers in the Special Warfare Training Group, to die of a drug overdose recently. (The others were Pfc. Jamie Boger, in March 2020, from cocaine and fentanyl; and Staff Sgt. Van-Michael Ellis, in October 2021, from cocaine and alcohol.) The incident occurred when Bracken was off duty, at a friend's wedding. His blood-alcohol level was 0.11 percent at the time that he died, at 10:35 a.m. on Dec. 5, 2020, according to a report obtained through the FOIA. Bracken's system also contained 0.012 milligrams of fentanyl per liter of blood — a lethal dose.

That's not what it says on his death certificate, though. "The cause of death could not be determined," his mother says, quoting the county medical examiner. "That's the way she put it." Andrea also had difficulty obtaining Bracken's vital records from the Army. "Can I get my son's records?" she asked them. "They said, 'Sure.' But they've had some issue.

"Although they expressed sympathy," Andrea continues, "the Army really had no interest in how he died. I have many unanswered questions, but nobody seems to give a shit."

	<p>It's a bitter sentiment echoed by the family members of other overdose victims. "They won't give me any answers," says Diamond's best friend, who was his legal next of kin. "They really hold their cards close to their vest. The whole thing was weird. They kept shuffling me around."</p> <p>"The Army was just like, 'Here, go tie ribbons on trees,'" says Bowman. "They need to open their mouths and start talking about this. The Army needs to say, 'Yes, this is a problem. We know this is a problem, and we are going to try to remedy the problem.' But they don't want to acknowledge it."</p> <p>It was freezing cold that February morning when the Bracken family met in Arlington. Above the uniform white tombstones, the trees were bare. Among the mourners was Zachary's sister, then 22. "She was his best friend," Andrea says.</p> <p>The funeral ceremony had already begun. But there was one final shock in store for the family, as the military added insult to injury. There was some kind of confusion in Zachary's burial paperwork. "As we're waiting with many, many, many people, they come out and tell us we're going to have to take our son's remains home," she recalls. "They said that there was a glitch in the information that they got, and something was overlooked. They told us that we would have to take him home with us."</p> <p>They drove back to Norfolk, Virginia, with Zachary's ashes in the car. At this point in the story, Andrea begins to cry. "There's no dignity in it," she says through tears. "It's no dignified way to die."</p>
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HEADLINE	09/03 Ukraine, EU border traffic high, stable level
SOURCE	https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/border-security/ukraine-eu-border-traffic-at-high-stable-level/
GIST	<p>Over recent weeks, the passenger traffic between Ukraine and the European Union has remained relatively stable. Frontex, the European border and coast guard agency, reports that the ten-days average number of Ukrainians entering the EU (41,000) was roughly in line with the number of people leaving the EU (43,000).</p> <p>In total, more than 9.5 million entries to the EU, including more than 8.5 million Ukrainian nationals, have been recorded since the beginning of Russia's invasion.</p> <p>Land border crossing points have been experiencing heavy freight traffic from Ukraine in recent weeks. Recovering export of grains by sea may lead to a gradual decrease of such traffic at the land borders.</p> <p>Frontex analysts predict that any intensification of the conflict in the south of Ukraine might lead to a rise in the number of Ukrainians fleeing their country. In the longer term, socio-economic factors, such as an economic contraction, extensive damage to infrastructure and occupation of territory important for agriculture may also encourage more Ukrainians to enter the EU.</p> <p>Over 4.1 million persons fleeing Ukraine have registered for temporary protection in the 29 EU+ countries from the beginning of the war to August 21, 2022.</p> <p>Frontex continues to support the countries neighboring Ukraine, including Moldova, with 253 staff and officers assisting with border control activities.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/04 Sweltering September heatwave grips West
SOURCE	https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2022/09/04/western-heatwave-california-records-climate/
GIST	OAKLAND, Calif. — California and the western United States are immersed in a historically severe September heat wave that is predicted to intensify early this week. The record-breaking temperatures are stressing power grids, fueling fires and endangering health.

The prolonged heat wave began on Aug. 30 and is forecast to peak on Monday and Tuesday before gradually easing during the second half of the week. Dozens of high temperature records have already been broken from California to Montana and dozens more [are forecast](#).

On Saturday, numerous cities in the Intermountain West endured their highest temperatures on record not only for Sept. 3 but for the entire month. [Salt Lake City](#) (which hit 103 degrees), [Pocatello, Idaho](#), (102 degrees), and Great Falls, Mont. (102 degrees) were among them.

“This is the worst September heat wave in Western USA history no doubt,” [tweeted](#) Maximiliano Herrera, a world weather historian, on Saturday night.

In Death Valley, Calif., the temperature has topped 120 degrees on five straight days, and [is predicted](#) to come close to the world record September temperature of 126 degrees Tuesday.

Climate scientists have found human-caused climate change is increasing the intensity, frequency and duration of heat waves such as this one. Nearly 50 million people are under excessive heat warnings or heat advisories through the early part of the week from California to Idaho.

Energy conservation urged

With temperatures forecast to soar into the 90s and 100s over much of the state Sunday, the California Independent System Operator (ISO), which oversees the power grid, issued the fifth consecutive “Flex Alert” calling for energy conservation between 4 p.m. and 9 p.m. to avoid outages. Demand on Thursday peaked at 47,357 megawatts, which was the highest load since September 2017, but usage fell a bit on Friday and Saturday.

“California consumers and businesses have responded to our Flex Alert calls with helpful reductions in their electricity use during the grid’s most challenging hours,” said California ISO chief executive Elliot Mainzer in a [video update](#) on Saturday. “Cooperation like this makes a real difference, so thank you everyone for that help.” The agency is bracing for peak demand on Tuesday of more than 50,000 megawatts.

Fires continue to rage

The punishing heat has fueled numerous fast-moving fires. In far northern California, near the town of Weed, firefighters are battling the Mill and nearby Mountain fires. The Mill Fire, which was 25 percent contained Saturday evening, destroyed 50 structures, prompted evacuations and injured multiple people. Both fires started on Friday.

The Route Fire, which erupted Wednesday east of Los Angeles, burned more than 5,200 acres and at least eight firefighters suffered heat-related injuries battling the flames. By Sunday morning the blaze was 87 percent contained.

Advertisement

Numerous fires have also erupted in Oregon, whose billowing [smoke plumes](#) could be seen from the Geostationary Operational Environmental Satellite on Saturday. Oregon Gov. Kate Brown (D) declared a state of emergency a week ago due to the [fire threat](#).

The Predictive Services of the National Interagency Fire Center is warning of “high risk” conditions in many areas of California and the Mountain West.

Searing conditions in the Central Valley

In the coming days some of the most excessive heat is forecast in California’s Central Valley. Sacramento has already reached the century mark four days in a row and is forecast to see [six more](#). The National Weather Service says it has a [67 percent](#) chance to match its September record of 109 degrees on Tuesday.

People who have to work outdoors during the heat wave are at particular risk, and California Department of Industrial Relations issued [an advisory](#) earlier in the week reminding employers of their legal obligation to protect workers by providing adequate water, shade and rest.

Cynthia Burgos, a farmworker in Bakersfield, where it is forecast to reach 111 degrees Tuesday, has plenty of experience working in the heat, harvesting carrots.

“By around 10 or 11 a.m., it is already very hot, and the humidity in the ground starts rising,” she said via a translator. “It’s just a miserable experience.”

Farmworkers have collapsed and even died in these conditions. On a day last year that surpassed 100 degrees, Burgos and other workers initiated a work stoppage because the only drinking water available was extremely hot. She is not working during this heat wave because she has been on leave to campaign for a state bill that would expand union voting rights for farmworkers.

“It shouldn’t be the workers’ job. It’s the employers’ responsibility to provide a safe working environment,” said Elizabeth Strater from the United Farm Workers union. “The higher the heat gets, the more it seems like they’re giving up.”

Beating the heat in the Bay Area

In the Bay Area, coastal regions have seen cooler temperatures from the 60s to the low 80s, but inland cities have gotten up to the 90s, with several areas expected to hit over 100 for the next few days in a row. As a precaution, the East Bay Regional Park District is [closing most](#) of the local parks for Sunday and Monday, to limit the chances of visitors sparking a fire.

“What makes this heat wave different is the duration,” said meteorologist Sarah McCorkle from the San Francisco Bay area office of the National Weather Service. In some places, she said, 100 degree heat may last more than seven days, which is unusual. “It’s a marathon, not a sprint.”

In the East Bay city of Dublin, Calif., on Saturday afternoon, the temperature was in the mid-90s, and three members of the Ting family were about to head into the movie theater for two movies in a row.

“Yesterday we had two power outages, one in the middle of the night, and one during the day,” said Mike Ting. His wife, Nola Ting, teaches at a nearby elementary school that let out early on Friday due to a power outage. A national promotion offering cheap movie tickets for a day is what got the family to the theater, but they said they appreciate the air conditioning.

“Whenever it’s hot, it’s always fun to do something cool in the middle of the day,” said Mike Ting. “Hopefully things will get better soon.”

Southern California swelters

The heat has been relentless in Southern California since the middle of last week. Burbank soared to a 112 degrees Wednesday and has topped 100 degrees every day since. On Saturday, even the typically mild San Diego set a [record high](#) of 95 degrees.

UPS driver Jared Hamil of Los Angeles said he recorded a temperature of 131 degrees in the back of his truck on Friday. “It’s like being in an oven,” he said.

Hamil reports that his truck does not have air conditioning or a fan, and he sometimes has to spend several minutes in the back area looking for a package. In the near term, to help reduce the load on drivers on hot days, he proposes that the company send out more trucks and split routes into smaller chunks to give workers shorter days. He adds that in his experience, managers are not always understanding of accommodations people make for their health. “Stop harassing people when they take a cool-down break or go use the restroom,” he said.

Matthew O'Connor, director of media relations for UPS, submitted a statement by email from the company asserting that "the health and safety of our employees is our highest priority." He listed efforts the company is making during the heat wave to prevent employees from overheating, including providing water, ice, electrolyte beverages, fruit, wicking uniforms and cooling towels, and stated that UPS is in the process of installing fans in vehicles.

Climate change connections

Research meteorologist Alexander Gershunov from the Scripps Institution of Oceanography said that heat waves have been getting more frequent and intense worldwide and in California, in particular, more humid.

"With higher humidity, temperatures don't really drop that much at night," he said. "And in terms of health impacts, that pretty much removes the nighttime respite that we need to face another day of scorching heat." He said these overall trends are not a surprise to researchers. Of all the extreme weather events, heat waves are "the most closely-related and directly-impacted by global warming."

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HEADLINE	09/05 Summer drought's hefty toll on crops
SOURCE	https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2022/09/05/crops-climate-drought-food/
GIST	<p>It was a bad year for corn. And for tomatoes. And for many other American crops.</p> <p>Farmers, agricultural economists and others taking stock of this summer's growing season say drought conditions and extreme weather have wreaked havoc on many row crops, fruits and vegetables, with the American Farm Bureau Federation suggesting yields could be down by as much as a third compared with last year.</p> <p>American corn is on track to produce its lowest yield since the drought of 2012, according to analysts at Rabobank, which collects data about commodity markets. This year's hard red winter wheat crop was the smallest since 1963, the bank's analysts said. In Texas, cotton farmers have walked away from nearly 70 percent of their crop because the harvest is so paltry, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The California rice harvest is half what it would be in a normal year, an industry group said.</p> <p>The poor yields are likely more than a one-year blip, as climate change alters weather patterns in agriculturally important parts of the country, contributing to higher food prices that experts don't see ebbing any time soon.</p> <p>Drought has consumed 40 percent of the country for the past 101 weeks, USDA meteorologist Brad Rippey said. But precisely where that 40 percent is has shifted over time, meaning different swaths of the country's agricultural land have been affected at different times, spreading pain and difficult choices geographically and by crop.</p> <p>"Spring wheat, durum wheat, barley [in the Northeast] — those were just hammered in 2021. For some of those crops it was the lowest yields we've seen since the 1980s," Rippey said. "The biggest impacts this year have been the Central and Southern Great Plains — Nebraska southward through Texas — and the two big crops hit this year are grain sorghum [primarily used for animal feed] and cotton."</p> <p>Based on last month's numbers, he said, it looks like abandonment of the Texas cotton crop will be the highest on record, around 69 percent: "That's when farmers just walk away."</p> <p>In California, farmers are making tough choices to give up on their strawberries and tomatoes, lettuces and melons, so that whatever water they get goes to crops like almonds, grapes and olives, where they've sunk multiyear investments and the payoff is better, Rippey said.</p> <p>Even with recent rains, a lot of the western United States is still looking at a long-term drought, said Curtis Riganti, a climatologist at the National Drought Mitigation Center. "We're seeing widespread extreme and</p>

exceptional drought in California's Central Valley, parts of Nevada, central and southern Oregon, the central High Plains, southern Oklahoma and Texas," he said. "And while we've seen a pretty active monsoon season this year over New Mexico, Arizona and southern Colorado, in terms of refilling reservoirs it doesn't do a ton of good."

Every August for the past 30 years, a group of agricultural experts and volunteer farmers in the Midwest hop in their cars and convoy across seven states, a boots-on-the-ground backstop for the USDA's ongoing predictions about annual crop yields.

The USDA had reduced its corn forecast last month because of this summer's drought. But the Pro Farmer Crop Tour, which concluded Aug. 25, found the corn yield was even worse than that lowered expectation. The on-the-ground inspectors also found the corn quality had suffered as a result of heat and dry conditions, with cobs carrying small grains and many suffering from "tipback," when kernels are missing from the outer edge.

Wheat has taken a wallop this year, with rains impeding spring planting after a protracted La Niña weather pattern meant several years of hotter and drier weather over key production areas.

Drought is also having a dramatic effect on California rice, which is grown mostly in the Sacramento Valley. The state, which grows medium grain rice like sushi rice, is at about half of a normal year's production, said Katie Cahill, spokeswoman for the California Rice Commission. Many growers decided to fallow their fields and sell their water to perennial crops like almonds to defray their losses.

The federal government operates a system of dams, reservoirs and canals in California that the state relies on for agriculture and drinking water. Water agencies contract with the federal government for certain amounts of water each year. The federal government fulfills the contracts based on how much water is available. This year, as the state's megadrought dragged into its third year, the government said it had no water to give farmers.

Last summer was a disappointment for tomato growers, said Aaron Barcellos, partner at A-Bar Ag Enterprises in Firebaugh, in Fresno County, Calif., "and we're still in a worse water situation than last summer."

"Even the river water has been cut back. Other crops are competing for that same water, other crops that have better returns," he said. On his own farm, he has cut back from 2,000 acres of tomatoes in 2020 to 900 last year. This year he has only 530 acres of canning tomatoes.

"Some of that land has gone to garlic and Pima cotton, the rest of it has gone fallow," he said. Contracts with canners are negotiated before the season starts, so an exceptionally tough year leaves growers in a hole financially. "We have contracts and those prices aren't viable now. A lot of growers are leaving the tomato industry because of the past several years," Barcellos said.

The USDA recently estimated that the tomato harvest this year will be 10.5 million tons, more than a million tons shy of a normal season, which will be reflected in the next year's pizza, spaghetti sauce and ketchup prices.

Harvest of the new potato crop is underway and Rabobank analysts say the harvested area is projected to drop 4 percent from last year (and last year's crop was a decade's low). Its analysts also said year-to-date shipments of carrots are down 45 percent, sweet corn down 20 percent, sweet potatoes down 13 percent, and celery down 11 percent, all an indication of short supply. And according to the USDA, total peach production was down 15 percent from 2021, mostly because of California's small crop.

One bright spot is soybeans. Gro Intelligence's modeling put a total soybean forecast at 4.30 billion bushels, lower than the USDA's 4.53 billion bushels but slightly higher than last year.

	<p>But the bad news extends to cattle, portending bad news for next year's beef prices. When weather is dry and hot, there's not enough natural feed to go around. To sustain a herd, ranchers must bring in hay, and feed prices soar, prompting ranchers to sell their animals a little early, and often to sell heifers, the young females, rather than keep them as breeding stock, said Sarah Little, spokeswoman for the North American Meat Institute, a trade association. This has resulted in lower beef prices to consumers in the short term, but signals that there will likely be a tighter supply next year.</p> <p>A recent Farm Bureau survey found that the largest herd decline is in Texas (reported down 50 percent), followed by New Mexico (down 43 percent) and Oregon (down 41 percent), largely due to scarce forage and water, which cuts into operational income for ranchers.</p> <p>"Producers are especially hard hit because food, fuel and fertilizer costs have been rising, so although they are getting record prices for cattle, inflation has hurt their income," Little said.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/05 Migrants in limbo: US fails to file paperwork
SOURCE	https://www.wsj.com/articles/many-migrants-left-in-legal-limbo-as-u-s-fails-to-file-cases-11662370201?mod=hp_lead_pos11
GIST	<p>Tens of thousands of migrants who crossed the border illegally in the past year are in limbo after the U.S. government failed to file the necessary paperwork in court, leaving them with no immigration case to fight and ambiguous legal status in the U.S.</p> <p>Migrants released into the U.S. after crossing the border from Mexico typically have an initial court date set several weeks later, the first step to applying for asylum or other protections in the U.S. and the start of a legal process that can take years to complete when everything goes as planned. The brief first hearing often ends with the judge setting a second hearing weeks or months later, giving migrants time to find a lawyer.</p> <p>Roughly 47,000 of the nearly 284,500 cases completed in U.S. immigration courts between the start of the federal fiscal year in October and June were dismissed because a document known as a Notice To Appear, or an NTA, wasn't filed, according to data compiled by the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse at Syracuse University.</p> <p>Between fiscal 2013 and 2020, fewer than 12,000 of about 1.6 million cases lacked government paperwork, according to TRAC. Last fiscal year, about 15,000 of 144,751 cases did.</p> <p>Unlike typical criminal cases such as a traffic violation, in which charges are dismissed if the government fails to do its part, immigration court cases can be filed at any time, leaving migrants in limbo.</p> <p>Immigration judges and lawyers say such delays, deemed "failure to prosecute" by Justice Department judges hearing the cases, are also undermining efforts by the Biden administration to reduce a backlog of cases that is approaching 2 million.</p> <p>"When hearings are scheduled and don't go forward due to a DHS 'failure to prosecute,' it strains an already overburdened system," said Mimi Tsankov, president of the National Association of Immigration Judges union, who also works as a judge in New York.</p> <p>Biden administration officials didn't give a reason why they haven't filed their paperwork in 17% of cases this fiscal year. Border authorities have recently been overwhelmed by a record number of illegal crossings from Mexico, expected to hit 2 million by the end of the fiscal year.</p> <p>A spokesman for the Department of Homeland Security said in a statement that in cases of missing or misfiled paperwork, it is standard practice for the government to fix the error "so that cases may resume and migrants can continue with their obligation to appear before an immigration court at a later date."</p>

	<p>On a recent Thursday morning in Los Angeles, immigration court Judge Nathan Aina said that 11 of the morning's scheduled 15 cases were being closed for failure to prosecute.</p> <p>"I don't know if we've ever had a docket with so many failure-to-prosecute" cases, Judge Aina said, adding without the necessary paperwork he doesn't have the legal authority to move forward.</p> <p>None of the 11 migrants whose cases the government failed to prosecute appeared in court. People who work with migrants said it may be because they called a government hotline that informed them they didn't technically have a case even though they had a hearing scheduled.</p> <p>Without any determination of their legal status, migrants in these situations don't have legal permission to live or work in the U.S., but they have also not been ordered to be deported to their home country.</p> <p>Some can apply for asylum during their first year in the country through a different process managed by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, though that typically requires assistance from a lawyer. Others often fail to understand that the government could file paperwork and reactivate their cases at any time, according to lawyers and activists.</p> <p>The missing case documents add another layer of complexity to an already overburdened system that lawyers and the judges' union argue needs to be overhauled completely.</p> <p>"The system has literally collapsed on itself," said Charles Kuck, an Atlanta-based immigration lawyer. "They could hire 1,000 more judges, but they aren't going to get through this backlog."</p>
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HEADLINE	09/04 Ukraine small advances in south, east
SOURCE	https://www.wsj.com/articles/ukraines-zelensky-rallies-europe-against-russias-energy-attack-after-gas-cutoff-11662287651?mod=hp_lead_pos10
GIST	<p>DNIPRO, Ukraine—Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky and other officials said Ukrainian forces were advancing in the south and east, in Kyiv's most positive assessment of the military picture in months.</p> <p>"Ukrainian flags are returning where they belong by right," Mr. Zelensky told a meeting of security chiefs Sunday.</p> <p>Ukraine's military indicated it had expanded a bridgehead across the Inhulets River in the country's south, where it launched an offensive last week aimed at squeezing Russian forces out of territory they seized in the early days of their invasion.</p> <p>Mr. Zelensky said two villages had been liberated in the south, without naming them. Government officials posted photos of Ukrainian troops raising the country's flag over a building in the village of Vysokopillya to the northeast of Kherson.</p> <p>"Step by step," Andriy Yermak, a top presidential adviser, captioned the photo on social-media app Telegram.</p> <p>The public acclamations of advances are a break with the first week of the southern offensive, launched last week amid great secrecy. They suggest an increasing confidence among Ukrainian officials that their plan to squeeze Russian forces from the western bank of the Dnipro River is working. Ukraine has used long-range artillery to target bridges across the river to cut the supplies of Russian troops.</p> <p>Ukrainian forces had spent the summer slowly retreating from their country's east in the face of Russian artillery and airstrikes that decimated cities. But Russian assaults there have faded in recent weeks amid exhaustion, a shortage of troops, and Ukrainian strikes on command posts and military-supply depots.</p>

In his nightly address Sunday, Mr. Zelensky hailed other advances as well, including in the east, seizing a village and pushing Russian forces back from the city of Siversk. Those gains indicate that Ukraine was seeking to exploit weak points exposed by Russia's decision to send thousands of troops from the east to reinforce the south.

Still, Ukrainian officials caution that liberating occupied territories will be a slow process. Ukraine doesn't have the armor and manpower to launch an overwhelming offensive, so it is seeking to wear down isolated Russian forces.

Lt. Gen. Igor Konashenkov, a Russian Defense Ministry spokesman, described Ukraine's southern offensive as unsuccessful. He repeated almost daily claims that Russian forces had killed hundreds of Ukrainian troops and destroyed command posts, without providing any evidence.

Russian missiles continue to rain down daily on Ukrainian cities. In the south, the Ukrainian head of the Mykolaiv regional military administration, Vitaliy Kim, said strikes overnight had inflicted significant damage on medical facilities, a museum and educational institutions. The northeastern city of Kharkiv was also hit, according to Mayor Ihor Terekhov.

Separately on Sunday, the U.S. Embassy in Moscow said Ambassador John J. Sullivan has concluded his tenure and departed Moscow. He was appointed by President Donald Trump in 2019. Mr. Sullivan, who previously served as the deputy secretary of State, plans to retire. Elizabeth Rood will oversee the embassy until a successor ambassador arrives, the embassy said.

A State Department official said Mr. Sullivan had served nearly three years, calling it a typical tour length for U.S. ambassadors to Russia. The official described the exit as planned and said the U.S. intends to announce the next ambassador soon.

Late Saturday, Mr. Zelensky urged European countries to respond to an "energy attack" from Russia, after it indefinitely suspended natural-gas flows to the continent through a vital pipeline.

The move was the latest escalation in an economic war that is set to come to a head this winter as cold temperatures increase demand for energy. Kremlin-controlled energy company Gazprom PJSC said late Friday it would suspend supplies of natural gas to Germany via the Nord Stream pipeline until further notice, ramping up pressure on European governments racing to avoid energy shortages.

"This winter, Russia is preparing for a decisive energy attack on all Europeans," Mr. Zelensky said in his address Saturday, urging European governments to respond with more sanctions and to deprive Moscow of revenue from oil and gas. Russia "is trying to attack with poverty and political chaos where it cannot yet attack with missiles."

Moscow has reduced gas supplies to Europe since June, blaming Western sanctions imposed in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine for preventing maintenance of the Nord Stream pipeline.

European governments say Moscow is deliberately stoking energy prices to raise the political costs of their military involvement with Kyiv and weaken voters' support for Ukraine. European governments and industry have been able to sock away more natural gas than some analysts had expected over the summer—protecting the continent from the threat of imminent large-scale shortages—but worries for the winter remain high.

Over the weekend, fresh signs of the potential risks energy shortages could present were on display.

An estimated 70,000 people took to the streets of Prague on Saturday in protest against the Czech government, calling on the ruling coalition to do more to curb energy prices and voicing opposition to the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

	<p>Organized by several far-right and fringe political groups, the demonstration called for the Central European nation to be militarily neutral and ensure direct contracts with gas suppliers, including Russia.</p> <p>Gazprom said Friday it had found a technical fault during maintenance of the Nord Stream pipeline, which connects Russia with Germany under the Baltic Sea. The pipeline, which had been due to resume operation on Saturday after three days of maintenance, will remain closed until the issue is fixed, the company said, without giving any timeline. Before the maintenance, the pipeline was operating at 20% of its capacity.</p> <p>The announcement came hours after the Group of Seven wealthy nations would move to ban the insurance and financing of shipments of Russian oil and petroleum products unless they are sold under a set price cap.</p> <p>Surging gas prices have spurred European governments to scale back their dependence on Russian gas ahead of the winter months, potentially undermining Moscow's leverage in the long run. In the short term, however, it could force them to ration energy—a move that would hurt industrial companies and tip the continent's already fragile economy into a recession.</p> <p>Germany on Sunday unveiled its third energy-crisis relief package this year, valued at €65 billion, equivalent to \$64.7 billion, to shield consumers from soaring prices over the winter. "Our country is facing a difficult time," Chancellor Olaf Scholz said. "We will not abandon anyone. We will get through this winter."</p>
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HEADLINE	09/05 Dollar strength lifts relative spending power
SOURCE	https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-dollar-strength-lifts-americans-relative-spending-power-11662304836?mod=hp_lead_pos3
GIST	<p>Inflation is high, but U.S. consumers' relative purchasing power has never been higher.</p> <p>An index that considers inflation when measuring the dollar's strength relative to currencies of major U.S. trading partners in July topped its previous peak from 2002, showing how the dollar's surge has helped mitigate rising domestic prices.</p> <p>The Real Effective Exchange Rate for the dollar, calculated by the Bank for International Settlements, measures the currency against a group of key U.S. trade partners, taking into account the changing prices of goods and services in each relevant economy. Some analysts say considering inflation provides a broader assessment of a currency's relative purchasing power than traditional measures.</p> <p>And the dollar has soared this year, in contrast to its declines during the inflation-plagued 1970s. The WSJ Dollar Index has gained in five of the past six months and is up nearly 13% in 2022. It has climbed past parity with the euro for the first time in 20 years, hit its strongest against the pound since 1985 and dented the Japanese yen, which traded Monday at 140.42 to the dollar, its lowest level since August 1998. The dollar ranked behind only natural gas among the best-performing assets in August, according to Deutsche Bank analysts.</p> <p>Few observers expect a long-term weakening soon. Investors and analysts said Friday's jobs data reinforced expectations that the Federal Reserve will continue to raise interest rates aggressively to cool inflation. That policy has been a key driver of the dollar's gains, with higher rates attracting investors' money from economies where they remain low.</p> <p>Thanos Bardas, global co-head of investment grade at Neuberger Berman, said Europe's war-fueled energy woes have joined lagging central bank policy there and in Japan in boosting the dollar, attracting overseas investors to everything from Treasuries to U.S. stocks. Structural factors could mean that persists, he said.</p>

“The innovation is taking place in the U.S.,” said Mr. Bardas. “So that element will always help the dollar.”

This year’s surge began after the Fed signaled it would rapidly raise rates to fight inflation, even at the expense of economic growth. That sparked selling in stocks and bonds, driving up the two-year Treasury yield, which typically moves with expectations for Fed policy. Others piled in to shelter from simultaneous selling in stocks and bonds, eventually sending the WSJ Dollar Index to multidecade highs.

Many now expect the Fed will continue raising rates well into 2023. The two-year yield recently hit its highest closing level since the run-up to the global financial crisis in 2007, around 3.5%.

The dollar’s strength makes imports cheaper while lifting the cost of U.S. goods for international consumers. That can hurt exporters and spur inflation abroad.

“The rest of the world gets a double whammy of higher import prices and tighter liquidity conditions,” said Steve Englander, global head foreign-exchange research and North America macro strategy at Standard Chartered. “The benefits to the U.S. are probably less than the damage to the rest of the world, but there is not much to be done about it.”

Inflation has [hit U.S. consumers hard](#), of course, draining wallets at the [gas pump, grocery store and car lot](#). But the combination of growth and inflation here has been more benign than in many other places. Inflation in the eurozone rose to a record in August while the U.K.’s annual rate of inflation moved into double digits in July.

Some Wall Street analysts contend the dollar is reaching its peak as other central banks begin to lift rates, too. The European Central Bank has indicated it could raise interest rates this month by three-quarters of a percentage point. Recent data from the Commodity Futures Trading Commission indicated that hedge funds have reduced bullish bets on the dollar.

For now, many observers expect the Fed’s rapid pace to continue boosting the dollar, along with recent volatility in riskier assets such as stocks.

“We think this is beginning to feel more like the blowoff top that we’ve been waiting for, but we don’t think it’s quite there yet,” said Stephen Gallo, European head of foreign-exchange strategy for BMO Capital Markets.

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HEADLINE	09/05 Europe girds for energy market turbulence
SOURCE	https://www.wsj.com/articles/europe-girds-for-energy-market-turbulence-after-russian-gas-cut-11662323365?mod=hp_lead_pos2
GIST	<p>European energy prices surged after Russia shut down natural-gas flows through a major pipeline, threatening to add to economic woes for businesses and households across the continent.</p> <p>Natural-gas futures in northwest Europe, which reflect the cost of fuel in the wholesale market, jumped more than 30% in early trading Monday. They remain below the all-time high recorded in late August.</p> <p>State-controlled Gazprom PJSC extended a halt to flows through Nord Stream late Friday. Moscow blamed the suspension on technical problems. European governments described it as an economic attack in retaliation for their support of Ukraine.</p> <p>Over the weekend, governments in Sweden and Finland offered billions of dollars of guarantees to utilities to prevent a meltdown in energy trading. Officials fear the loss of imports through Nord Stream could lead to a further leap in power prices and saddle utilities with cash payments to energy trading exchanges that they may struggle to meet. A wave of failed payments could undermine financial stability, officials said.</p>

“This has had the ingredients for a kind of a Lehman Brothers of energy industry,” Finland’s Economic Affairs Minister Mika Lintilä said Sunday.

Swedish and Finnish government officials worked through the weekend on programs designed to make sure electricity producers can meet exchange payments known as margin calls. Stockholm is home to Nasdaq Clearing AB, a subsidiary of Nasdaq Inc. that processes most derivative trades in the Nordic power market, which includes Finland and the Baltic countries.

Under the Swedish plan, the government would provide guarantees to eligible companies, which could then use the guarantees to borrow from banks and pay the exchange clearinghouse. The Swedish government would have license to extend up to 250 billion kroner, or \$23 billion, in guarantees, said a finance-ministry official.

The Finnish government plans to offer 10 billion euros, or \$10 billion, in guarantees.

Nasdaq Clearing spokesman David Augustsson said the measures would help the power market act in an orderly manner Monday. “This is an extreme time of uncertainty and the addition of government liquidity guarantees will add an extra layer of stability,” he said.

Last week, European Energy Exchange AG, the main European venue for power trading outside the Nordics, said Germany and other European Union members should help companies fund margin payments. A spokesperson didn’t respond to requests for comment on Sunday.

Armed with the guarantees, utilities and other energy companies would find banks more willing to lend money to cover margin payments, the Swedish official said. The Swedish parliament will vote on the program Monday and it would take effect the same day if approved. One concern is that the clearinghouse itself might default, the official said.

“This threatens our financial stability. If we don’t act soon it could lead to serious disruptions in the Nordics and Baltics,” Swedish Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson said Saturday at a news conference outlining the plan. “In the worst-case scenario we could fall into a financial crisis,” Ms. Andersson added.

When utilities agree to deliver gas or power, they lock in prices by selling futures contracts. Exchanges charge one payment, known as initial margin, when trades are placed to collect collateral. They then call for or return money each day depending on whether the position gains or loses value.

As prices rise, utilities’ short positions shed value and the companies pay the exchange. They recoup the money when they deliver gas or power, but the difference in timing has led to massive outflows of cash that some firms have struggled to fund. At times a vicious cycle has emerged in which extreme price moves boost margin calls, prompting companies to bail out of trades and sparking more volatility.

“No one’s got the money to pay to trade,” said Justin Colley, an analyst at Argus Media. “Putting up these margin payments every day is just causing problems for everyone—not just the small companies, but also the big companies, the national utilities.”

The guarantees could add to the mounting cost for governments of aiding households and businesses through a historic rise in energy prices largely caused by Moscow’s move to cut gas exports. On Sunday, Germany unveiled its third energy relief package this year, worth €65 billion, to shield consumers.

European energy ministers are due to hold an emergency meeting Friday to discuss options for dealing with skyrocketing electricity prices, such as a possible price cap for non-gas sources of power generation.

They will also consider energy companies’ cash concerns. The Czech Republic, which holds the EU’s rotating presidency, is expected to put forward several options for ministers to consider, including the temporary suspension of power derivatives markets and a European credit line for energy market participants, an EU diplomat said.

	<p>European gas and power prices have been wildly volatile. They shot to records in late August before slumping last week after the European Union said it would change the structure of the power market to bring down prices for consumers and businesses. Nordic and Baltic prices have been especially turbulent, in part because a drought curbed hydropower generation in Norway.</p> <p>Tom Marzec-Manser, gas analyst at ICIS, said he expected gas and electricity prices to rise again Monday in response to Gazprom's shut-off. "Meeting demand, whatever that might turn out to be, is going to be that much harder," he said.</p> <p>To a certain extent, energy markets were already girding for Russia to completely cut off gas supplies. Gazprom had reduced Nord Stream flows to 20% capacity in the weeks before the shutdown.</p> <p>Some factors could act to bring prices down after an initial leap, traders and analysts said—including the action taken by Nordic governments. Weather forecasts suggest there might be greater power generation from wind farms, reducing demand for gas.</p> <p>Uniper, one of the two biggest buyers of Russian gas in Europe until recently, said last week it had fully drawn down a €9 billion credit line from German state lender KfW. The company said it had asked to borrow an extra €4 billion to make margin payments and buy gas to make up for lost deliveries from Gazprom.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/05 Western North America suffers heatwave
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/sep/05/weather-tracker-heatwave-in-north-america-threatens-to-break-global-september-temperature-record
GIST	<p>Western areas of North America are continuing to suffer a significant heatwave that is threatening to break the highest global September temperature record. The global record in September is 52.2C (126F), in 1950 in Mecca, California. On 1 September this year, temperatures at Furnace Creek in Death Valley reached a scorching 51.3C (124.4F), less than a degree off the all-time record.</p> <p>In the following days, several Canadian provinces' September records were broken, including Alberta, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia. On 2 September Lytton in British Columbia reached 39.6C (103F), only 0.4C off the September record for all of Canada. Records in many other cities also fell on 2 and 3 September. The remainder of this week will stay anomalously hot, about 10C above average, with a continued threat of records falling but the heat is expected to move away eastwards later this week.</p> <p>Hurricane season is finally beginning to ramp up, which may help suppress the high temperatures across the western US. Since the formation of the first tropical hurricane of the 2022 season last week, Typhoon Hinnamnor, which is still affecting Japan and the Korean peninsula, more tropical disturbances have been developing.</p> <p>A tropical storm (Twelve-E) off the Pacific coast of Mexico has been deepening quickly over the last 48 hours with showers and thunderstorms becoming more organised as the low deepens. Forecast models suggest there is a high likelihood of this developing into a category 1 hurricane on Tuesday, although the maximum wind strength remains uncertain. The track of this storm system is expected to follow the Mexican coast northwards towards California throughout this week, bringing stormy conditions all along western Mexico.</p> <p>Through the second half of this week the storm system will affect areas around the California Baja peninsula, and even up into southern California, with a possibility of 100-200mm of rain accumulation in the space of 24 hours bringing a risk of significant flooding. From intense heat to strong flood risks, this would be a very dramatic change in weather in the course of a week for south-western states in the US.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/04 FEMA director: flood maps outdated
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/sep/04/fema-flood-maps-climate-change-georgia-floods
GIST	<p>Flood maps used by the federal government are outdated, the director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, or Fema, said on Sunday, considering a series of devastating floods caused by excessive rainfall induced by climate change.</p> <p>Deanne Criswell told CNN's State of the Union: "The part that's really difficult right now is the fact that our flood maps don't take into account excessive rain that comes in. And we are seeing these record rainfalls that are happening."</p> <p>Criswell was questioned about the situation in Jackson, Mississippi, where city water facilities failed in the aftermath of heavy flooding on the Pearl River, leaving residents without drinkable or usable water.</p> <p>On Sunday, thunderstorms and heavy rain pounded parts of north-west Georgia, sparking flash floods. Local news reports showed roads under water and homeowners struggling.</p> <p>The Georgia governor, Brian Kemp, declared a state of emergency in Chattooga and Floyd counties, directing all state resources to help with "preparation, response and recovery activities".</p> <p>The National Weather Service (NWS) reported rainfall of up to an inch an hour. Up to 12in was estimated to have fallen, according to Kemp's executive order.</p> <p>"This is an extremely dangerous and life-threatening situation," the NWS said. "Do not attempt to travel unless you are fleeing an area subject to flooding or under an evacuation order."</p> <p>Such excessive rainfall and flooding will bring back into focus difficulties in predicting and responding to the climate crisis.</p> <p>Criswell said Fema would work with local jurisdictions "to help them better identify what their needs are and help them create better predictive models, because we have to start thinking about what the threats are going to be in the future as a result of climate change, so they can put the mitigation measures in place".</p> <p>Last month, rainfall in Missouri, Kentucky and Illinois broke century-old records, causing devastation to communities, buildings and infrastructure.</p> <p>"Fema's maps right now are really focused on riverine flooding and coastal flooding and we work with local jurisdictions to update the maps," Criswell said.</p> <p>A 2020 study of flood risks by the nonprofit First Street Foundation that analyzed every property in the 48 contiguous US states found federal maps underestimated by 67% the number of homes and businesses in significant danger.</p> <p>In Georgia on Sunday, the NWS declared a "flash flood emergency" for Summerville, Lyerly and James H Floyd State Park in Chattooga county. Floyd county, just to the south, was also under a flash flood warning. The NWS advised people to avoid non-emergency travel.</p> <p>The city of Summerville advised residents who use the city's water services to boil water prior to drinking, cooking or preparing baby food, due to flash flooding at the Raccoon Creek Filter plant.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/05 Day 194 of the Russia invasion
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/sep/05/russia-ukraine-war-latest-what-we-know-on-day-194-of-the-invasion
GIST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ukraine has made progress in its recently launched counter-offensive with its forces taking two settlements in the south, a third in the east, as well as additional territory in the east of the

country, president Volodymyr Zelenskiy claimed during a Sunday evening address. “The Ukrainian flags are returning to the places where they should be by right,” he added. Kyrylo Tymoshenko, deputy head of the president’s office, posted an image of soldiers raising the Ukrainian flag over a village he said was in Ukraine’s south. “Vysokopillya. Kherson region. Ukraine. Today,” Tymoshenko wrote.

- **Russian authorities said the situation around the Russian-occupied Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant in southern Ukraine was calm** on Sunday, after UN inspectors said on Saturday it had again lost external power. The last remaining main external power line was cut off although a reserve line continued supplying electricity to the grid, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said in a statement. Only one of its six reactors remained in operation, it said. Speaking to Komsomolskaya Pravda radio, Russian official Vladimir Rogov said there had been no shelling or incursions. IAEA experts are expected to continue working at the plant until at least Monday, Russian official Vladimir Rogov said.
- **Analysts are expecting gas prices to [surge to record highs this week](#)** after Russia [shut down a key pipeline to Europe](#). Many commentators warned that European prices will further rise when markets open on Monday after Moscow [scrapped a Saturday deadline](#) for flows to resume through the Nord Stream 1 pipeline to Germany, saying it had discovered a fault during maintenance.
- **Zelenskiy warned Europe to expect a difficult winter** after Moscow shut down a main pipeline that supplies Russian gas to the continent. “Russia is preparing a decisive energy blow on all Europeans for this winter,” he said.
- **Thousands gathered in Prague to [protest at soaring energy bills](#)** and demand an end to sanctions against Russia over the war in Ukraine. About 70,000 far-right and extreme-left elements coalesced at a “Czech Republic First” rally to call for a new agreement with Moscow over gas supplies and a halt to the sending of arms to Ukraine on Sunday.
- **A Russian journalist is [facing a 24-year jail term for treason](#)**. Ivan Safronov, a former military correspondent for Kommersant and Vedomosti, is facing a “record” sentence on treason charges that have been prosecuted with secret evidence behind closed doors. A Russian judge is expected to deliver a verdict on Monday in one of the most significant prosecutions against a Russian journalist in decades.
- **The Russian state should be [tried for historical crimes committed by the Soviet Union](#)**, the Ukrainian director Sergei Loznitsa said before the premiere of his new documentary, The Kiev Trial, at Venice. Speaking at a press conference, Loznitsa said there needed to be contrition for the wrongs of the past. “History repeats itself when we don’t learn from history, when we didn’t study it and don’t want to know what happened with us,” he said.
- **Sweden has said it is on “high alert” for [outside intervention in its upcoming election](#)** amid increased tensions with Russia. The Scandinavian country’s recently re-established psychological defence agency said it had seen heightened activity from foreign sources after its application to join Nato and it was prepared for the possibility of “something exceptional” in the lead-up to polling day on 11 September.
- **Ukraine’s prime minister has [thanked Germany for its solidarity](#) in the face of the Russian invasion** while calling for more weapons, in a sign of easing tensions between Berlin and Kyiv. Denys Shmyhal, who was welcomed by the German chancellor, Olaf Scholz, with military honours in Berlin on Sunday, is the most senior Ukrainian official to visit the German capital in months.
- **Scholz said on Sunday his government had been planning for a total halt in gas deliveries** in December, promising measures to lower prices and tie social benefits to inflation. “Russia is no longer a reliable energy partner,” Scholz told a news conference in Berlin. In response, former Russian president Dmitry Medvedev accused Germany of being an enemy of Russia. “In other words, it has declared a hybrid war on Russia,” he said.
- **China’s top legislator Li Zhanshu will attend the seventh Eastern Economic Forum in Vladivostok** this week, becoming the most senior Chinese official to visit Russia since the Ukraine war began. Li, chairman of the National People’s Congress Standing Committee, will pay official visits to Russia, Mongolia, Nepal and South Korea from Wednesday to 17 September, according to Xinhua news agency. He will attend the four-day forum, set to begin on Monday, during his stay in Russia.

HEADLINE	09/04 Chile voters reject progressive constitution
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/sep/05/chile-votes-overwhelmingly-to-reject-new-progressive-constitution
GIST	<p>Chileans have voted comprehensively against a new, progressive constitution that had been drafted to replace the 1980 document written under Gen Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship.</p> <p>With 99.9% of the votes counted in Sunday's plebiscite, the rejection camp had 61.9% support compared with 38.1% for approval amid what appeared to be a heavy turnout with long lines at polling states. Voting was mandatory.</p> <p>Senator Ximena Rincón, one of the leaders of the reject campaign, described the victory as "clear and emphatic", and called for a new constitutional convention to be convened.</p> <p>The "approve" campaign has accepted defeat and the country's 36-year-old president, Gabriel Boric, has already called a meeting of party leaders for Monday morning at La Moneda, the presidential palace.</p> <p>"I commit to put my all into building a new constitutional itinerary alongside congress and civil society," said Boric in a televised address to the nation, confirming that he would meet with the heads of political parties and both chambers of congress on Monday morning.</p> <p>The 1980 document drawn up under Pinochet will now remain in force and Chile's future looks decidedly uncertain.</p> <p>In 2020, an initial plebiscite saw nearly 80% of voters opt to draft a new constitution, but after an arduous year of negotiations, people appear to have expressed their dissatisfaction with the end product.</p> <p>As results trickled in and the reject camp's lead grew, groups of jubilant reject supporters crowded street corners and filled squares up and down the country to celebrate their victory.</p> <p>There were concerns that disgruntled approve supporters could stage a repeat of the 2019 demonstrations that started the constitutional reform process. But a crowd of no more than several hundred gathered in the main square in Santiago and they were quickly dispersed by police using water cannons and tear gas.</p> <p>The proposed constitution included a long list of social rights and guarantees that had appeared to respond to the demands of that vast social movement.</p> <p>It enshrined gender parity across government and other organs of the state – for the first time anywhere in the world – prioritised environmental protection and recognised Chile's Indigenous peoples for the first time in the country's history.</p> <p>The decision to reject a constitution that guaranteed women's rights and gender parity was made 70 years to the day since women were first given the vote in Chile.</p> <p>"This is a badly written constitution," said Carmen Fuentes, 61, who cast her vote in a wealthy north-eastern suburb of Santiago. "There's been a division in this country for a long time, and this plebiscite won't change that."</p> <p>Many criticised the document's guarantees for Indigenous people, which they said would divide Chile. Others warned that the shakeup of the political system was unnecessary and experimental.</p> <p>In the centre of the city, others were more optimistic that a change could be possible, citing the need to shed Chile of the Pinochet-era constitution and the model it enshrined, moving on to a more egalitarian, democratic future.</p>

	<p>But that future now looks distant. Boric has expressed a willingness to repeat the constitutional process, but the basis for reform is still very much up for debate.</p> <p>Some of the constitution's most prominent critics have mooted allowing congress to reform the 1980 document or including experts in a new process, but details were light from both sides, with neither willing to commit to a possible way forward.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/04 Russia troops morale, discipline problems
SOURCE	https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/sep/4/morale-and-discipline-problems-russian-troops-ukra/
GIST	<p>Morale among Russian military troops in Ukraine is plummeting but it's not just because they're getting bombarded with artillery and rockets supplied by the West.</p> <p>After more than six months' worth of inconclusive fighting, soldiers sent to carry out President Vladimir Putin's invasion aren't being adequately fed or receiving a regular paycheck.</p> <p>In addition to the record number of casualties and combat fatigue, one of the main grievances from deployed Russian soldiers continues to be problems with their pay, according to British military intelligence officials.</p> <p>Russian troops normally receive a "modest" core salary that must be augmented by a variety of bonuses and allowances.</p> <p>"In Ukraine, there have highly likely been significant problems with sizeable combat bonuses not being paid," British officials said Sunday in a Twitter message. "This is probably due to inefficient military bureaucracy, the unusual legal status of the 'special military operation,' and at least some outright corruption among commanders."</p> <p>In addition to problems with pay and rations, Russian commanders are apparently unable to provide their troops with appropriate uniforms and weapons, analysts said.</p> <p>"This has almost certainly contributed to the continued fragile morale of much of the force," British military intelligence officials said.</p> <p>U.S. officials said they also have tracked morale problems among the Russian troops operating in Ukraine.</p> <p>"Imagine you're a Russian soldier — a couple of months into it, and you've been getting hit pretty hard by (Ukrainian) artillery and HIMARS," a senior Defense Department official said last week, referring to the U.S.-supplied High Mobility Artillery Rocket System. HIMARS has become one of the most lethal weapons on the battlefield in Ukraine.</p> <p>Russian losses have forced Moscow to expand recruitment efforts by eliminating the upper age limit for new recruits and coaxing prisoners into their army. President Putin ordered that the increase in troops be finalized by January 2023.</p> <p>"Many of these new recruits have been observed as older, unfit, and ill-trained," the Pentagon official said. "Any additional personnel Russia is able to muster by the end of the year may not, in fact, increase overall Russian combat power."</p>
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HEADLINE	09/05 US nuclear-capable bombers over Mideast
SOURCE	https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/sep/5/us-b-52-bombers-fly-over-middle-east-amid-tensions/
GIST	<p>DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — The United States military said Monday it flew a pair of nuclear-capable B-52 long-distance bombers over the Middle East in a show of force, the latest such mission in the region as tensions remain high between Washington and Tehran.</p>

The bombers took off from the Royal Air Force base at Fairford, England, and flew over the eastern Mediterranean, the Arabian Peninsula and the Red Sea on Sunday in training missions together with Kuwaiti and Saudi warplanes, before departing the region.

“Threats to the U.S. and our partners will not go unanswered,” Lt. Gen. Alexis Grynkeiwich, the top U.S. Air Force officer in the Middle East said in a statement. “Missions like this ... showcase our ability to combine forces to deter and, if necessary, defeat our adversaries.”

Although the U.S. military’s Central Command did not mention Iran, Washington has frequently dispatched B-52 bombers to the region as hostilities simmered between the U.S. and Iran. The last such flyover was in June.

Iran’s regional foe, Israel, also joined in the multinational mission. Though unacknowledged by the U.S., three Israeli F-16 fighter jets accompanied the American bombers “through Israel’s skies on their way to the (Persian) Gulf,” the Israeli military said, describing the country’s cooperation with the U.S. military as key to “maintaining aerial security in Israel and the Middle East.”

Central Command was expanded last year to include Israel, a move seen to encourage regional cooperation against Iran under former President Donald Trump.

Trump’s decision four years ago to withdraw the U.S. from Tehran’s landmark nuclear deal with world powers sparked a series of escalating incidents in the region.

Even as diplomats now wrangle over a possible revival of the nuclear accord, Iran’s navy seized two American sea drones in the Red Sea last week.

That capture came just days after the country’s paramilitary Revolutionary Guard towed another sea drone before releasing it as an American warship trailed it. The U.S. Navy has been deploying ultra-endurance aerial surveillance drones to monitor threats in the crucial waterways, which have witnessed repeated maritime attacks.

Tensions also remain high after recent confrontations between U.S. forces and Iranian-backed militias in the region. Washington last month carried out airstrikes in eastern Syria that targeted areas used by militias backed by Iran’s Revolutionary Guard, prompting a response from Iranian-backed fighters.

U.S. and Iranian negotiators in Vienna have been attempting to revive the 2015 nuclear deal, which imposed sharp limits on Iran’s atomic program in exchange for international sanctions relief. Last week, the State Department described Iran’s latest negotiating position as “not constructive.”

Meanwhile, Iran now enriches uranium up to 60% purity - a level it never reached before that is a short, technical step away from 90%. While Iran long has maintained its program is peaceful, nonproliferation experts warn Tehran has enough 60%-enriched uranium to reprocess into fuel for at least one nuclear bomb.

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HEADLINE	09/05 Gulf Coast faces hurricane season anxiety
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/05/us/hurricane-season-louisiana.html
GIST	<p>IOWA, La. — In a community still etched with the scars of past storms that charged in from the Gulf of Mexico, the congregants at St. Pius X begin each service this time of year by petitioning God with the same solemn appeal: Please, spare us.</p> <p>“We live in the shadow of a danger over which we have no control,” they say, repeating the prayer at every Mass from the start of hurricane season in June through the end in November. “The Gulf, like a</p>

provoked and angry giant, can awaken from its seeming lethargy, overstep its conventional boundaries, invade our land, and spread chaos and disaster.”

But so far this year, there has been no invasion. Any chaos and disaster are the residuals of devastating hurricanes that pummeled this stretch of the Louisiana coast two years ago.

It has been a hurricane season without hurricanes. But the quiet, however appreciated, does not bring much comfort.

“Who knows what next week holds?” said the Rev. Jeffrey Starkovich, the pastor at St. Pius X, a Catholic parish in Ragley, La., an unincorporated community about 20 miles north of Lake Charles. “You can’t rest. You can’t be confident it’s going to stay quiet.”

Last month was the first August in 25 years without a named storm in the Atlantic Ocean. No hurricanes have made landfall this year in the United States. And though hurricane season spans six months, it is this time of year — from late-August through October — when the season typically packs its most powerful punch.

A weather system named Danielle strengthened last week into a Category 1 storm, becoming the first hurricane of the season; it weakened briefly to a tropical storm before regaining hurricane status. Entering the week, she cut a meandering path over the Atlantic and posed little threat to land.

In a part of the world where so many routines and rituals are shaped by the rhythms of hurricane season, the relative calm has done anything but inspire complacency. Instead, it has offered communities often in the path of hurricanes yet another vivid illustration of how capricious nature can be.

“We really don’t have any sighs of relief until hurricane season is completely over,” said Nic Hunter, the mayor of Lake Charles, a working class city in southwestern Louisiana still staggering its way back from a powerful pair of storms in 2020. “With all we’ve been through, I don’t think anyone wants to test fate.”

The very existence of this article and others like it is a source of considerable unease. Asked about hurricane season while she and a friend were outside working on a lawn mower last week, Ricki Lonidier pressed her finger to her lips and glared.

“Don’t speak it into existence!” her friend, Richelle Wiley, said.

But she knew their luck would last only so long. “We know it’s coming,” she said. “It’s inevitable.”

That evening, the humid air was thick with mosquitoes. She took it as a sign of brewing trouble.

Scientists still expect an “above normal” hurricane season this year, with 14 to 20 named storms and up to 10 of those strengthening into hurricanes. Last year, there were 21 named storms. The year before that set a record with 30.

On the Gulf Coast, hurricanes are more than just weather events. Their names — Audrey, Katrina, Rita, Ike, Laura — become chronological reference points for marking history. Chain-link fences are often referred to as hurricane fences, and for several years, a newspaper on the Texas coast called its weekly entertainment guide “cat5,” for a Category 5 hurricane, because, well, why not?

Like clockwork, around June, hurricane-themed public service announcements start filling commercial breaks on TV and radio and appearing on highway signs. It is time to start stockpiling water, canned goods and batteries. It is time to use up the food in the freezer so you will not have to toss out too much when a storm surely will knock out power.

Then, the anxiety sets in.

“It’s kind of like the proverbial sword of Damocles — it hangs over your head,” said Bishop Glen John Provost of the Diocese of Lake Charles, who leads worshipers through a “Mass to Avert the Storms” every year at the beginning of hurricane season. “The apprehension grows from the unknown.”

But in recent years, along this slice of the Louisiana coast, the tumult and torment of a hurricane have become far less abstract. A changing climate has intensified the threat, and powerful storms are likely to become more frequent.

In 2020, Hurricane Laura made landfall in Cameron Parish, south of Lake Charles, as a Category 4 storm with 150-mile-per-hour winds — one of the most powerful storms to strike Louisiana. Roughly six weeks later, Hurricane Delta hit, cutting a nearly identical path. “What wasn’t taken out by Laura was finished by Delta,” Curtis Prejean said last week as he sat on his back porch with his wife, Shirley.

In the communities in and around Lake Charles, the recovery had been long and uneven. Mr. Prejean has a brother who has been living in a camper for two years. Ms. Wiley’s home had been stripped down to its studs inside and the outside was still battered. She is in a constant fight to fend off black mold.

The next storm could take what little some have left.

“We were talking about the hurricanes yesterday,” Ms. Wiley said, “and reality is stopping me, because I have nowhere to go. I’m about to be homeless.”

During one recent storm, the Prejeans put down a mattress pad in the hallway of the modest home where they have lived for 33 years and rode it out with two dogs and a cat. The house vibrated, and the noise was terrifying. “I told my husband we’re never doing that again,” Ms. Prejean said.

“I’m going to stay for a Cat. 1,” Mr. Prejean said. “A Cat. 2 ...” He shrugged. That’s where he was unsure.

No matter the category, Curtis Goodwin — or as everyone knows him, Warrior War Dog — vowed to stay put. Blue tarps covered parts of his roof, and his exterior walls were still damaged. But he had fortified part of his house with the expectation that his family and dogs would pile inside.

“I’m going to stay right here, and I’m going to ride it out,” he said.

He knew what his cousin and her family had gone through when they left town in anticipation of Hurricane Laura. A few frightening hours at home were better than the weeks of frustration and turbulence that come with evacuating, he reasoned.

Katina Jackson, his cousin, was gone for several months. First, she fled her home in Lake Charles for San Antonio. On the way, the axle on her car broke. If it were not for a mechanic giving her a deal, her family would have been stranded. They stayed in hotels in San Antonio and Fort Worth before going home.

The return of hurricane season dredged up all of that.

“It’s just going to be catastrophic again,” Ms. Jackson said outside her cousin’s house, helping her daughter take out her braids on a hot but otherwise pleasant evening. “I feel like it’s always quiet before the storm.”

A few minutes later, ominous clouds that had been lurking in the distance swarmed the neighborhood in darkness, and a surge of lightning ripped through the sky.

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HEADLINE	09/04 Northern Calif. fire evacuations; 2 dead
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/04/us/mill-fire-california.html

YREKA, Calif. — Wind-whipped fires that have forced the evacuation of thousands in Northern California have killed at least two people, the authorities said Sunday.

The news of the deaths came as firefighters struggled for a third day to vanquish the flames. The Mill fire, which erupted on Friday near a defunct lumber mill in the town of Weed, Calif., has consumed more than 4,200 acres there and in nearby communities and destroyed at least 100 homes, local officials said, though they are still assessing the damage. Among the areas devastated was the Lincoln Heights area of Weed, a historically Black community that was founded by Black mill workers in the 1920s.

Witnesses said the fire, whipped by howling winds, exploded so suddenly that there was scarcely time to evacuate. By Sunday afternoon, it was 25 percent contained.

The two killed in the Mill fire were women, ages 66 and 73, said Jeremiah LaRue, the Siskiyou County sheriff-coroner. They were not related, he said. “We have lost two people to this fire,” Sheriff LaRue told a community meeting in Montague, a town north of the fires. “There’s no easy way of putting that.”

The Mill fire was the first of two substantial blazes to ignite on Friday in Siskiyou County, near the Oregon border. As of Sunday afternoon, the larger Mountain fire had raced through more than 8,400 acres and was only about 10 percent contained. Overall, 4,300 firefighters from across California were working to contain those two fires, according to Cal Fire, the state’s fire protection agency.

On Sunday, residents of Weed and other communities including Lake Shastina were trying to process the destruction and scale of loss.

Stacey Green, a city councilor in Weed, home to about 2,900, has lived in the Lincoln Heights neighborhood for more than 50 years. The fire destroyed his home and took everything he had.

“My point of reference is just dirt. Black, gray dirt, and it’s leveled,” he said at a Red Cross evacuation center provided by the Karuk Tribe in Yreka, about 30 miles north of Weed.

Mr. Green was taking a nap on Friday when he heard knocking on his door. He woke up to see flames engulfing a tree in his front yard. He then saw that his backyard was on fire, too. Across from his home on Crestmore Avenue, houses were already in flames, he said. Unable to find his keys, wallet or shoes, he left with only his cellphone and the clothes on his back. Surrounded by smoke, he walked to a nearby highway in his socks.

On Monday, Mr. Green will spend his 59th birthday at the evacuation center, not the room he grew up in. His grand piano, which he learned to play by ear, will not be there. Neither will the photographs of his late parents.

“I feel like a piece of me is gone. That’s what made me, and that’s no longer there,” he said.

Eddie Russell, who lived in an apartment in Lincoln Heights, was another evacuee at the shelter. He said that he had just moved back to Weed in May from Georgia, where he had lived for two decades, after his mother had died. He felt like he was putting down roots in Lincoln Heights.

“That was my home, I was settling down,” Mr. Russell said.

He, too, lost everything in the fire, including a tablet with photographs of his mother.

“All I had was my backpack and the clothes on my back,” Mr. Russell said. He said he was upbeat but honest about his loss, and that it would not be the first time he needed to start over in life.

Many longtime residents of Siskiyou County are familiar with that predicament. But after the Boles fire in 2014 and the Lava fire in 2021, along with recent fires in Yreka, the continual evacuations have many in the region reeling.

	<p>Sheriff LaRue said that the fires have been “devastating” for the working-class small towns. He added that residents who live within fire zones can face “extraordinarily” high insurance rates, making it hard for people to afford premiums and adequate coverage.</p> <p>The geography of Weed is a factor in its vulnerability to fire. The town was founded as a lumber town, and the mill was built there because the winds coming off Mt. Shasta dried the timber, Sheriff LaRue said.</p> <p>But those same winds, along with drought and high temperatures, also serve as a propellant to any fires in the region.</p> <p>“If you get a fire, it’s like a blowtorch,” he said.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/04 ‘Dust ups’ regional homelessness system?
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/homeless/will-politics-always-steer-king-countys-homelessness-system/
GIST	<p>The King County Regional Homelessness Authority was supposed to align Seattle, the county and the suburbs on homelessness strategy and eliminate the political jockeying that has long plagued the system.</p> <p>At least, that’s what elected officials, led by then-Mayor Jenny Durkan, said in 2019 when they signed it into existence.</p> <p>But three years later — only one with a CEO hired — quarrels between the authority and elected officials have shown that perhaps that promise might never come.</p> <p>The authority’s requests for budget increases drew opposition from elected officials. A long simmering debate over expanding tiny house villages blew up publicly. And a King County Council member called for the authority to be audited.</p> <p>Most recently, Seattle Mayor Bruce Harrell, who has stood with the authority’s CEO Marc Dones to praise their successes, vented to police officers that he was frustrated with how little control he has over the organization, implying that he could reduce its funding.</p> <p>In the first year as CEO, Dones has expressed a desire to make decisions based on data and best practices, not politics.</p> <p>But politics appear inescapable in the homelessness system as designed.</p> <p>The same elected officials that hired Dones are the ones who control the purse strings for the authority’s budget and are the ones accountable to residents at the ballot box.</p> <p>The established powers’ reluctance to fully hand over the reins of the homelessness system has led to what officials have described as “squabbles,” “public dust-ups” and “tensions.”</p> <p>This December, the authority will unveil its five-year plan, which Dones says would “end homelessness” in the region.</p> <p>That is, if everyone could get on board.</p> <p>Politics of homelessness</p> <p>Elected officials face enormous public pressure to turn the tide on the growing homelessness crisis. Seattle voted in Harrell as mayor in 2021 in part based on his pledge to clear the city’s streets and parks of encampments and create places for homeless people to go. While King County Executive Dow</p>

Constantine was on the campaign trail last year, the county bought nine hotels for permanent and temporary shelter.

Given the political climate, elected officials say, of course they need to be able to influence the homelessness authority's decisions.

"That is absolutely our lane," said Seattle City Councilmember Teresa Mosqueda, who leads the city's budget committee. "I'm the one who gets phone calls from constituents daily. I'm the one who goes to the day care or the grocery store and gets asked about what we're doing."

Seattle officials point out that the city directly gives \$120 million to the authority — 61% of its operating budget according to the latest numbers from the agency, much of the rest coming from King County.

"We have to be stewards of city dollars," said fellow Seattle Councilmember Andrew Lewis.

Seats on the authority's governing committee are evenly divided between Seattle officials, the county, suburban cities, and people with lived experience being homeless. But some say that politicians still exert too much influence over decision-making that was supposed to lean more on experts who work in the industry and those who are or have been homeless.

"The problem with ending homelessness has been the electeds," said Bill Kirlin-Hackett, director of the Interfaith Task Force on Homelessness. He said elected officials base decisions on what is politically popular rather than what people on the streets need. He sees the City Council and others' involvement over the past year as micromanaging.

Dones said that allowing the experts to more independently steer the homelessness system is still a work in progress.

"There are going to be tensions," Dones said. "Anytime you're trying to shift the system, you can expect there's going to be some seesawing."

'Public dust-up'

An unusually visible tussle for control came in March when The Seattle Times [reported](#) that state Rep. Frank Chopp, a powerful Democrat who represents Seattle, had seemingly taken away the authority's ability to allocate \$2 million in state funds to nonprofits to build and operate tiny home villages, after a competitive bidding process had already begun. Chopp had instead given it directly to the Low-Income Housing Institute, which he helped found.

Some authority board members called it a power play by Chopp, and questioned the ethics of the maneuver, though it was legal.

Chopp, other state leaders and aides said the issue was with the city not spending the money in a timely manner and that Chopp notified the authority of his plans well in advance.

That's what was said publicly. But Councilmember Lewis, a member of the Regional Homelessness Authority's governing committee who supported Chopp's move, said that there was a larger political disagreement below the surface of the "public dust-up."

"The subtext is we're having this big argument about tiny homes," Lewis said. "We're having this big argument about, is the tiny home the right thing to do?"

The homelessness system's tiny houses are small rooms with a roof, a bed, some storage and a door, providing more privacy than traditional shelters where hundreds of people can be sleeping in a single, large room. These tiny homes are clustered together near shared bathrooms and other services.

Dones, since becoming CEO about a year ago, has discouraged the expansion of tiny home villages, saying data shows that the larger emphasis should be on building permanent housing.

Posted on the authority's website is a statement from September 2021 by the Lived Experience Coalition, which helps advise the authority and includes members living in tiny homes, that says tiny homes "are in fact sheds" with "dehumanizing conditions."

While Dones said Dones' positions are based on data, others say the positions are based on politics.

"Marc is a politician, I mean, let's be real about that," Lewis said. "If the authority denies a resource allocation to one place, that is a political decision."

Tiny home advocates like Lewis, who launched his "It Takes a Village" initiative last year to rapidly expand the number of tiny houses in Seattle, said tiny homes have evolved in quality to now having insulation, wood floors and shingled roofs. And Lewis' position has momentum among local elected officials.

While the authority planned to use the state funds to build tiny homes anyway, it initially didn't award them to the Low-Income Housing Institute, a powerful nonprofit that controls nearly all of the tiny home villages in Seattle. Sharon Lee, the institute's executive director, called for a review of the authority for bias against the institute.

After an authority staff member called tiny house villages "shantytowns," prompting public backlash, Dones apologized to Seattle City Council members, writing that tiny house villages "serve an important role in the shelter system."

When the dust had settled, the authority had funded three organizations for tiny home projects, one of which was the institute.

Lee said that showed Dones' mind had changed on tiny homes.

Mosqueda said Dones, a newcomer to Seattle and King County, may have learned the "hyperlocal level of support that we have for tiny house villages."

Ilaudia Balducci, King County Council chair and a member of the authority's governing committee, said the authority learned "how and why it's important to build close alignment among the key stakeholders."

Others saw this episode as Dones trying to do the job and the established powers rejecting that change.

"What they did was seen and their attitude of 'this person got put in their place' is not appreciated," said Johnathan Hemphill, co-chair of the authority's governing committee and a member of the Lived Experience Coalition.

Dones said the authority had based its decision on new information that made the numbers work rather than political pressure.

Will tensions improve?

The blame game seems to begin anytime there's money involved.

That's been the case with the authority's past two budget requests, when Seattle officials complained the Regional Homelessness Authority did not reach a consensus with them before requesting an amount so large it caught people off guard.

Dones expressed disappointment when the city mostly [denied the request in November](#), and said that would force the authority to "redo the plan."

This year, after the authority asked for its budget to be [nearly doubled](#), Mayor Harrell said the authority had not done the hard work of paring down its “wish list” to a more realistic, prioritized ask.

Dones said the authority’s request should not have surprised anyone.

“There’s no new message here,” Dones said. “What I have said since Day One is we already know close to how much this is going to cost.”

In a recent interview with reporters from multiple outlets, Dones said, “The true cost of ending homelessness in this region is probably close to a billion dollars.”

Asked to elaborate on the figure, the authority referred to an oft-cited [article published by McKinsey and Co.](#) in 2020 that ending homelessness in King County would cost between \$4.5 billion and \$11 billion over 10 years.

Disagreements between city officials and department heads over the size of their budgets are fairly normal. What’s less normal is an official calling for an early audit of a new organization less than a year into its having financial control of anything, which King County Councilmember Reagan Dunn did in late August.

Dunn said he believes the authority has not pursued the most cost-effective solutions to get homeless people off the streets, questioning the authority’s funding of service providers that distributed toilet kits at a [Green River encampment](#), which is in his district. He said clearing the streets is the sole measure of its success, and he wants a third party’s opinion.

“I think that there might be misplaced compassion and misplaced priorities that may not be doing the best work with the dollars provided in terms of reducing homelessness,” Dunn said.

He called the audit request a “political nudge.”

The authority said its founding legislation already requires it to be audited.

This pattern makes some skeptical that everyone will be able to come together on more ambitious plans, such as the authority’s upcoming five-year road map.

“There will be people who believe that that proposal is not the right one. And if those people are also the ones being asked to pay for it, you have inevitable conflict built into that,” said Mary Steele, executive director of homelessness nonprofit Compass Housing Alliance.

A big boost in funding may be hard to get. The mayor recently told police officers privately of his frustration having “no control over” the authority, which he said is “working against” his efforts to remove more homeless encampments, a conversation originally reported by conservative talk radio station KTTH. In a news conference after his private remarks were released, Harrell didn’t directly answer a question about whether he’d seek to cut the authority’s budget. Instead, he said, the city’s next budget will recognize “a lot of great work” from the authority.

Dones and the authority did not directly respond to Harrell’s comments.

The authority has said it “does not support displacement,” but it does coordinate outreach efforts with the city’s clearing schedule to try to bring people inside.

The authority clearly has its critics, but even the mayor said it has also made positive strides that make him optimistic.

A plan to reduce people living outside in downtown Seattle, dubbed “Partnership for Zero,” is one of the authority’s biggest successes thus far, [raising over \\$10 million](#) in private donations and receiving praise by

	<p>leaders focused on the impacts of visible homelessness. That effort has gotten underway with staff hired who are starting to assess the needs of unsheltered people living downtown.</p> <p>And after initially struggling to use federally funded emergency housing vouchers, the authority, in partnership with local housing authorities, has said it has housed more than 1,000 homeless families in King County, which puts it well past the national average for this program.</p> <p>Dones has also received local and national attention for new approaches to long-standing problems, such as homelessness surveys.</p> <p>On a late spring Friday afternoon, Dones, exhausted after a long week of meetings, said the focus on political tensions in the homelessness system distracted from its real mission.</p> <p>“There are no heroes and villains here,” Dones said. “There are people who live outside and that’s unacceptable. And that’s what we need to be focused on.”</p>
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HEADLINE	09/03 China decries US \$1.1B arms sale to Taiwan
SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2022/09/03/asia/china-retaliate-us-taiwan-arms-trade-deal-hnk-intl/index.html
GIST	<p>(CNN)China has warned the United States it will take "counter-measures" after the Biden administration approved more than \$1.1 billion in arms sales to Taiwan.</p> <p>Chinese embassy spokesman Liu Pengyu said Saturday China was "firmly opposed" to the sales, which "severely jeopardize China-US relations and peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait," and called on Washington to "immediately revoke" them.</p> <p>Liu's comments on Twitter came after the Biden administration on Friday formally notified Congress of the proposed sales, which include up to 60 anti-ship missiles and up to 100 air-to-air missiles.</p> <p>The State Department said the sales are in line with a longstanding US policy of providing defensive weapons to the island and described the "swift provision" of such arms as being "essential for Taiwan's security."</p> <p>China, however, has accused the US of interfering in what it sees as its internal affairs.</p> <p>China's Communist Party claims Taiwan, a self-governing democracy, as part of its territory -- despite never having governed it -- and has long vowed to "reunify" the island with the Chinese mainland, by force if necessary.</p> <p>"The US interferes in China's internal affairs and undermines China's sovereignty and security interests by selling arms to Taiwan," Liu tweeted.</p> <p>"It sends the wrong signals to 'Taiwan independence' separatist forces and severely jeopardizes China-US relations and peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait," Liu said.</p> <p>He called on the US to "honor its commitments to the one-China principle" and ended his series of tweets by saying Taiwan is "an inalienable part of the Chinese territory" and warned China will "resolutely take legitimate and necessary counter-measures."</p> <p>US-China tensions have spiked since House Speaker Nancy Pelosi visited Taiwan last month.</p> <p>China had warned Pelosi against making the trip, and responded by ordering days' worth of military drills around the island after she had left.</p>

	<p>Taiwan said Saturday it "highly welcomes" the latest arms sales and thanked the US government for "continuing to implement its security commitments to Taiwan."</p> <p>"In response to China's recent continuous military provocations and unilateral changes in the status quo and creating crises, Taiwan's determination to defend itself is extremely firm," Taiwan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement Saturday.</p> <p>"This batch of arms sales includes a large number of various types of missiles that are needed to strengthen Taiwan's self-defense, which fully demonstrates that the great importance the US government attaches to Taiwan's defense needs, assisting our country to obtain the equipment needed for defense in a timely manner and to enhance our national defense capabilities."</p> <p>In an incident that underscored the heightened tensions, Taiwan's military shot down a drone hovering over one of its island outposts just off the Chinese coast on Thursday.</p> <p>A day earlier, Taiwan said it had warned off drones hovering over three of the islands it occupies off the coast of the Chinese port city of Xiamen.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/03 Jackson Miss. setback restore water supply
SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2022/09/03/us/jackson-mississippi-water-crisis-saturday/index.html
GIST	<p>(CNN)The situation remains dire for many Jackson, Mississippi, residents as the city enters the sixth day since a major water plant failed, leaving thousands of people unable to access clean tap water.</p> <p>Efforts to restore the supply suffered a setback Friday when a chemical imbalance and reduced water pressure were detected.</p> <p>"It's like fixing the airplane while you're still flying. You have to be very careful how you fix it so that you stay flying," Jim Craig, the senior deputy and director of health protection at the Mississippi health department, said Friday evening during a news conference.</p> <p>"It's the same thing as we're trying to produce water. All that water demand needs to continue to occur and every time we have to do some maintenance then we have to offset some of that," Craig explained.</p> <p>The city of roughly 150,000 residents had been under a boil-water notice since July 30 -- and then flooding caused by heavy rainfall last weekend led to a chemical imbalance at the O.B. Curtis Water Treatment Plant.</p> <p>Since then, the lives of Jackson's residents have been upended, subjecting them to wait in long lines under a beaming sun in sweltering heat for bottled water they can use to drink, cook or brush their teeth. It has also shuttered schools.</p> <p>"We are constantly paying water bills and we can't use the water," said Jackson resident Corean Wheeler. "We feel like we are living in a third-world country in America, and that's kind of bad."</p> <p>But progress has been made, according to state and local officials.</p> <p>Jackson Mayor Chokwe Antar Lumumba pointed to "two consecutive days of gains" during a news conference on Friday, while also acknowledging that not "all residents have pressure or water."</p> <p>"The team is there 24/7 working to make certain that those gains are established or sustained," he said.</p> <p>On Friday morning, Craig noted the treatment plant was pumping water at 85 PSI, which is a unit known as pounds per square inch, measuring pressure in the lines. It was reduced to 77.2 PSI later in the day, he said.</p>

The reduction means areas farther from the plant and at higher elevations may still experience low to no water pressure, according to a news release from the city. The goal was to get pressure levels up to 87 PSI, the city said.

By Saturday afternoon, city officials said most of Jackson should have water pressure, according to a Facebook post.

The water plant made "significant gains" from Friday night into Saturday, increasing the total plant output to 86 PSI with the goal of reaching 87 PSI.

"The outlook is very stable. However, additional challenges as repairs and adjustments are made do leave the potential for fluctuations in progress," the city release said.

The city said a few remaining pockets in South Jackson may still be experiencing low or no pressure as work continues in the plant Saturday on both the membrane and conventional systems.

Increased water pressure could lead to pipe bursts, mayor warns

As crews work to increase the water pressure, Lumumba warned another infrastructure issue could be on the horizon.

"As they are able to increase the pressure at the plant to levels that it has not seen in many years, the challenge then becomes whether we have pipes that rupture across the city," he said. "We know that we have brittle pipes, we have aged pipes just as our water treatment facilities are aged."

In early 2020, the water system failed an Environmental Protection Agency inspection, which found the drinking water had the potential to host harmful bacteria or parasites.

Residents were also without water for a month when pipes froze and burst during a 2021 winter storm.

The problems are largely systemic -- old and leaky pipes, malfunctions at treatment plants and insufficient money to fix the problems, according to a report by the Mississippi Center for Investigative Reporting, which the Clarion Ledger published in January.

In July 2021, the EPA and the city entered into an agreement to address "long-term challenges and make needed improvements to the drinking water system." The EPA also recently announced \$74.9 million in federal water and sewer infrastructure funds for Mississippi.

Advocates have previously pointed to systemic and environmental racism as among the causes of Jackson's ongoing water issues and lack of resources to address them. About 82.5% of Jackson's population identifies as Black or African American, according to census data, while the state's legislature is majority White.

Staffing at the plant also has been a problem, officials have said.

Six of the 11 water tanks have reached stable levels, and the remaining are in the process of improving their levels, the city noted in a news release.

In the meantime, officials are still urging residents to boil their water.

For Jackson to reach a clean water benchmark, the state health department must test 120 water samples from different locations over a two-day period, and all the samples must return clean results, the governor said.

"I can commit to you today that we will continue to advise Jacksonians to boil their water until we actually get to the point," Gov. Tate Reeves said.

	<p>He also added seven state-run water distribution sites handed out almost 2.8 million bottles of water in less than 24 hours Thursday.</p> <p>President Joe Biden also approved an emergency declaration for Jackson, and it will allow Mississippi to tap into critical resources to respond to the crisis, Reeves said.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/03 New Mexico city has 20 days fresh water left
SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2022/09/03/us/las-vegas-new-mexico-water-crisis-climate/index.html
GIST	<p>(CNN)A city in New Mexico has about 20 days of fresh water left, and officials there are scrambling to find another source to prevent cancer-causing particles from flowing out of faucets.</p> <p>The hillsides around Las Vegas, New Mexico, were scorched by the state's largest wildfire on record this spring, which burned more than 340,000 acres. Then, an unusually wet monsoon season brought significant summer rainfall -- something that would typically be celebrated in the drought-stricken West, but instead has led to disaster-upon-disaster as rainfall washed the charred debris into the region's water system.</p> <p>Now, one of the city's two reservoirs is filled with contaminated water that the current filtration system cannot handle. It's also a health risk -- when carbon reacts with high levels of chlorine used to treat water, it can become carcinogenic.</p> <p>"We need to get the carbon out of the water before we add disinfection," Las Vegas Utilities Director Maria Gilvarry told residents at a recent forum.</p> <p>With time running out to secure a new clean source, city officials plan to spend this weekend testing and pre-treating the water from a nearby lake, hoping it can provide enough to keep the taps running clear.</p> <p>"Our fingers are crossed on that," Las Vegas Mayor Louie Trujillo told CNN, adding the tests "will determine the quality of water we're going to be sending to one of our reservoirs."</p> <p>It could take multiple days to complete the tests and pretreatment to get it right; Gilvarry told CNN the key is finding the right level of chemicals that will make the water drinkable, but not too much to create carcinogenic byproducts in the supply.</p> <p>If the quality of the new water source is good enough to run through the city's water infrastructure, that will buy it a few more months of water, which officials are hoping is enough time to install another treatment system capable of processing the sediment-heavy water in their second, currently unusable reservoir. If not, city and state officials may have to implement a boil order or take other actions to ensure clean water; but it's too early to tell what those actions may be, Gilvarry said.</p> <p>It's a particularly frustrating situation, given just how good this year's monsoon season was.</p> <p>"After the biggest fire in the state's history, we had the best monsoon season in probably 14 years," Trujillo told CNN. "Unfortunately, we weren't able to use any of that water that was coming down our river because it was too heavily polluted for the treatment facility that we currently have."</p> <p>Giant trees, tiny particles</p> <p>The West's megafires do more than burn trees and shrubs. A massive, hot fire also completely changes the composition of the soil, making it less stable, more prone to erosion and therefore more likely to wash into the water system.</p> <p>In the case of Las Vegas, the huge burn scar from Calf Canyon/Hermits Peak Fire combined with hard monsoon rainfall resulted in thousands of acres of ash and debris falling into the Gallinas River watershed.</p>

When the erosion happened, it posed dual threats to the city's water supply. One was that trees and rocks could fall into the river and damage water infrastructure. The other was that ashy sludge could contaminate the water itself.

The US Army Corps of Engineers constructed debris catchment nets that have prevented damage to water infrastructure itself, said Army Corps Capt. Robert Zebrowski, and they "fortunately haven't had a giant flow of trees."

But the smaller particles have been much harder to control.

The Army Corps installed wattles -- mesh nets filled with hay -- along the watershed to try to catch the ashy sludge before too much got into the water system. It has succeeded in slowing the contamination but isn't a solution to the problem, Zebrowski said.

"There's no way to stop all ash from getting in everywhere," Zebrowski added.

Gilvarry said that even if they can secure a clean backup source, there will be some amount of sediment in the drinking water for the next decade, simply because the fire burned such a large swath of the land surrounding Las Vegas.

Living with less

As Las Vegas counts down the days that it still has potable water, residents have been living with less and less.

"It's pretty critical at this point, we're doing all we can," Trujillo said, adding citizens have been asked to reduce their water usage down to 44 gallons of water a day per person, conserving as much water as possible.

This collective conservation has bought Las Vegas more time. Gilvarry told CNN that it has allowed city officials to stretch out their untainted reservoir -- approximately a week longer than earlier estimates.

Las Vegas was already operating in drought restrictions before the wildfire happened earlier this year, asking residents to not fill pools, wash cars or water their lawns. But the fire and its aftermath turned the water situation into a crisis.

Trujillo said the community has been strong and stuck together in the face of an incredibly difficult year.

"The people of this area are just so strong and very cooperative," he said, but added that residents are "very concerned."

State and federal funding has helped the community get at least a temporary water treatment system, but Las Vegas needs much more funding to replace their current water treatment facility with updated infrastructure to pretreat the water. Trujillo is hoping the immediate crisis can help spur a longer-term solution.

"The silver lining for me is the most permanent solution to this is to replace our water treatment facility and improve some of our infrastructure," he said. "That's still a ways away, but it's within grasp now."

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HEADLINE	09/03 Fall surge unlikely; but variants a wildcard
SOURCE	https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2022/09/03/fall-covid-surge-boosters-2022/
GIST	Cold weather favors the coronavirus . But as summer gives way to fall, infectious-disease experts are guardedly optimistic that the spread of covid-19 this autumn and winter won't be as brutal as in the previous two years of the pandemic.

[Coronavirus scenarios](#) from multiple research teams, shared in recent weeks with federal officials, foresee stable or declining hospitalizations in early fall. The scenarios show the possibility of a late-fall surge. A new variant remains the biggest wild card. But several factors — including the approval [this week](#) of reformulated boosters and the buildup of immunity against the [latest strain of the virus](#) — could suppress some of the cold-season spread, experts say.

“There’s sort of even odds that we would have some sort of moderate resurgence in the fall. But nothing appears to be projecting anything like an [omicron wave](#),” said Justin Lessler, a University of North Carolina epidemiologist who helps lead the collection of covid-19 planning scenarios from a group of research organizations.

The scenarios assume that [reformulated vaccine boosters](#) will be embraced by the public at a rate similar to that of the annual flu shots — possibly an optimistic assumption given that more than half of Americans eligible for boosters have yet to receive their first dose.

Peter Marks, the top vaccine official at the Food and Drug Administration, said in a briefing Wednesday that the approval of reformulated boosters comes as the agency is “looking at a possible fall wave, with a peak around December 1st.”

Predictions about the pandemic rarely age well. In the United States, the pandemic appeared to be [winding down in May 2021](#) amid a vigorous vaccination campaign, only to get wound up again with the rise of the new variants.

The emergence of a new variant in September could result in a wave of infections and severe illness in December, according to Lauren Ancel Meyers, director of the University of Texas Covid-19 Modeling Consortium. A variant emerging in October would push the peak to January, she said.

Any new variant that could change the pandemic’s trajectory would have to be more transmissible than the [omicron subvariant BA.5](#) currently circulating. It might emerge from an obscure branch of the virus’s family tree — which is exactly what happened last November, when omicron, with its stunning package of mutations, appeared in southern Africa and immediately overtook the [reigning delta strain](#).

Vaccines remain highly effective at lowering the infection fatality rate and keeping people out of the hospital, and the Biden administration continues to lean heavily on vaccination and [boosting as the most powerful weapon](#) against the virus. Anthony S. Fauci, the president’s chief medical adviser for the pandemic, told The Washington Post that the fall campaign against the virus will demand widespread [uptake of booster shots](#).

“We’re not going to eradicate it. We’re not going to eliminate it,” Fauci said. “But we do have the capability to get it to a low enough level so that it doesn’t continue to disrupt the social order.”

The federal government, meanwhile, is turning much of the fight against the virus over to the private sector. As of Friday, the government would [no longer mail](#) free coronavirus tests to the public. The plan is to transition the payment of treatments to insurers, pharmacy benefit managers, hospitals and patients themselves by the middle of next year. Updated boosters have already been purchased by the federal government and will remain free to consumers.

But booster uptake so far has been underwhelming. Of the 62 million people over the age of 50 who are eligible for a second booster, [only 22 million have received it so far](#), according to CDC data. Of the 95 million people between 18 and 49 who are eligible for their first booster, only 38 million have availed themselves of it.

Some may be waiting for the reformulated vaccine before rolling up their sleeves again. But covid apprehensiveness is not what it once was, and many may feel that a couple of shots is enough.

Moreover, some people may need help getting access to an additional shot, said Brown University epidemiologist Jennifer Nuzzo. She would like to see stronger messaging from the government to encourage vaccination.

“The most important thing we can do — top, top, top of my list — is make sure that everyone who is at high risk is up to date with their vaccinations,” she said.

The CDC is reporting about 82,000 new covid cases daily, on average, although the true number of infections is assumed to be many times higher because so many people test themselves at home. The more reliable number is hospitalizations, currently about 30,000 patients, according to the CDC. Both numbers are trending downward, as is the death toll, which has been hovering around an average of 400 per day, according to the CDC. (The Washington Post’s [coronavirus tracker](#), which relies on data from state health departments rather than the CDC, showed the seven-day average for deaths was 554 as of Saturday.)

Average daily deaths peaked above 3,300 in January 2021, as the virus spread in an overwhelmingly unvaccinated population, and topped 2,600 per day the following winter amid the [omicron wave](#).

If no new coronavirus variant emerges, the numbers should stay stable or decline until the new year, [the report](#) from Lessler’s forecasting group states.

The most pessimistic scenario is that a new variant will appear and the booster campaign will get rolling late, resulting in a projected 1.3 million hospitalizations and 181,000 deaths over a nine-month period (August 2022 to May 2023), compared with 700,000 hospitalizations and 111,000 deaths in the most optimistic scenario, with no new variant and an early start to the booster campaign.

Dylan George, director of operations at the CDC’s recently established [Center for Forecasting and Outbreak Analytics](#), compares disease modeling to weather forecasting. The agency looks at many models, incorporating variables to create a wide range of plausible scenarios. Right now, he said, the CDC believes that the BA.5 subvariant is cresting in most of the country.

Behavior is another variable in the equation. Precautions have largely been relaxed for much of the country. Many companies are requiring workers to report to the office but no longer require vaccination or provide regular coronavirus testing. Schools have dropped mask mandates.

“People are not wearing masks,” George said. “People are running around in bigger groups. People are traveling more. Schools are not having any kind of mitigation. Will that impact spread in a bigger way as well?”

Waves of infection are to some degree self-limiting. The virus “burns through all the susceptibles,” as George put it, losing momentum. But then time passes, and immunity wanes. [Vaccine-based immunity](#) against infection appears to drop significantly in a matter of months, even as protection against severe disease continues.

Another complication is the presence of [other circulating viruses](#), including influenza, which also has a cold-weather seasonal signature.

“There’s all sorts of respiratory things, especially as we go into the school season,” George said. “How is flu going to play out now that we’re all coming together? ... There has always been concern about the [‘twindemic.’](#)”

Fauci noted that, following a cascade of new subvariants earlier this year, the BA.5 omicron subvariant and the almost identical BA.4 have not been challenged this summer by a new strain. Immunity against BA.5 and BA.4 has been steadily building in the population as people get infected and then recover. That immunity should get a significant enhancement from the new boosters that have been designed to fight not only the original strain of the virus, but also BA.5/BA.4.

“I don’t think it’s going to be a major surge if it stays BA.5,” Fauci said of the hypothetical fall wave of cases.

Amid a broader return to normal behavior there remains a significant contingent of people who are covid-cautious — aware that hundreds of people a day are still dying from the virus — and continue to wear masks indoors or limit contacts with others.

Millions are now experiencing the health crisis of [“long covid,”](#) an array of post-infection symptoms that include severe fatigue and [brain fog](#). It is a slippery disease to diagnose conclusively because many symptoms could signal long covid or a different ailment. One CDC report said [1 in 5 infected people](#) develop long covid.

Marks, the FDA official, said he routinely fields calls from people in their 20s and 30s with long covid symptoms, and said the illness represents a serious public health challenge. “The brain fog, in some cases, the mood changes — people who used to be very bright and cheery, who now are anxious and depressed — those things seem to be very real,” he said.

Some patients have struggled with long covid for more than two years and have been unable to return to work or resume their pre-pandemic way of life.

“Some are young, healthy, athletic people, and they can’t even go back to work,” said Akiko Iwasaki, an immunologist at Yale University School of Medicine. “People should know the risk before they remove the mask and stop getting their boosters.”

Evidence points to the virus settling into a seasonal pattern, said Columbia University epidemiologist Jeff Shaman. Viral transmission is enhanced by the low humidity of the indoor environment during the winter as well as by the decline in sunshine and its sterilizing ultraviolet radiation, Shaman said.

He worries that the virus could continue to sicken and kill people at rates higher than the seasonal flu, which, [according to CDC data](#), took between 12,000 and 52,000 lives per year between 2010 and 2020. If the covid mortality continues at the same rate as it has been over the past five months, that would be roughly 120,000 deaths a year, Shaman calculated. If that is the new normal, it’s sobering, he said.

Infectious-disease experts don’t want to tempt fate with sunny forecasts. The coronavirus is [still adapting](#) to people as it mutates randomly, and natural selection favors the most immune-evasive strains.

“My forecast is that you can’t really forecast,” Fauci said. “It is such an unpredictable virus in the sense that we’ve been fooled before, and we likely will continue to be fooled.”

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HEADLINE	09/03 Day 192 of the Russia invasion
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/sep/03/russia-ukraine-war-latest-what-we-know-on-day-192-of-the-invasion
GIST	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Russian energy company Gazprom announced that the Nord Stream pipeline 1 would not restart on schedule on Saturday, citing turbine damage. Gazprom’s CEO, Alexei Miller, indicated that Siemens could not carry out repairs because of sanctions. The European Commission chief spokesman, Eric Mamer, said Gazprom was staging the shutdown “under fallacious pretences”.• The head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Rafael Mariano Grossi, who returned from a first visit to the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, said six of the team’s experts remained at the site to continue the work. He told reporters the mission would produce a report early next week of its findings. Grossi said military operations were increasing in the region of the plant, “which worries me a lot”. He said the military presence was not available when he asked to speak to them about the control centre, they did not approach his team and they were “withdrawn” throughout their visit to the Russian-controlled facility in south-eastern Ukraine .

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance ministers from the Group of Seven (G7) nations have announced they plan to implement a price cap on Russian oil. In a statement, the ministers said the cap was designed to reduce “Russia’s ability to fund its war of aggression” and that they would “urgently work on the finalisation and implementation” of the measure, but left out key details of the plan. • Prior to the G7 announcement, the Kremlin said imposing the price cap would trigger Russian retaliation. If G7 leaders went ahead it would lead to significant destabilisation of the global oil market. Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said. • Ukraine’s military has claimed that Russian forces suffered “significant losses” in the southern region of Kherson following Kyiv’s counteroffensive launched earlier this week. Ukraine’s successes have been “quite convincing”, according to a spokesperson for the southern Ukrainian military command, who added that more “positive news” would likely follow “very soon”. • Ukrainian troops have pushed back Russian forces at several points around Kherson, according to western officials. Officials estimate that about 20,000 Russian troops are in the pocket of the southern region, and caution that it is too soon to determine if Ukraine’s counterattack is working. • The “physical integrity” of the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant has been “violated several times”, Rafael Grossi said. The IAEA chief said after leading the inspection team that while he would continue to worry about the plant, the situation was “more predictable” now. • Ukrainian officials have accused Russia of manipulating and distorting information shared with the IAEA. Ukrainian state-owned operator Energoatom said Russian officials “are making every effort to prevent the IAEA mission from getting to know the real state of affairs. They spread manipulative and false information about this visit.” • The Russian defence minister, Sergei Shoigu, has accused Ukraine of “nuclear terrorism”. Pro-Russian proxy authorities in Zaporizhzhia have accused Kyiv of trying to smuggle “spies” into the IAEA inspection team posing as journalists. • The head of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People’s Republic, Denis Pushilin, has restated the expansionist military aims of Russia’s invasion. “Our task is to liberate all Russian cities that were founded by Russian people during the time of the Russian Empire, and developed during the Soviet Union thanks to the help of our entire vast country,” Pushilin said. “This is not only the territories of Novorossia [the Donbas], but also much wider. It will not be any other way.”
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HEADLINE	09/04 Ukraine to Europe: Russia ‘energy attack’
SOURCE	https://www.wsj.com/articles/ukraines-zelensky-rallies-europe-against-russias-energy-attack-after-gas-cutoff-11662287651?mod=hp_lead_pos5
GIST	<p>DNIPRO, Ukraine—Ukraine’s President Volodymyr Zelensky urged European countries to respond to an “energy attack” from Russia, after it indefinitely suspended natural-gas flows to the continent through a vital pipeline.</p> <p>The move was the latest escalation in an economic war that is set to come to a head this winter as cold temperatures increase demand for energy. On the battlefield, Russian and Ukrainian forces are also digging in for winter, seeking to gain territory and secure positions before bad weather makes maneuvering harder and complicates operations for soldiers.</p> <p>Kremlin-controlled energy company Gazprom PJSC said late Friday it would suspend supplies of natural gas to Germany via the Nord Stream pipeline until further notice, ramping up pressure on European governments racing to avoid energy shortages.</p> <p>“This winter, Russia is preparing for a decisive energy attack on all Europeans,” Mr. Zelensky said in his nightly address, urging European governments to respond with more sanctions and to deprive Moscow of revenues from oil and gas.</p> <p>“It is trying to attack with poverty and political chaos where it cannot yet attack with missiles.”</p>

Moscow has reduced gas supplies to Europe since June, blaming Western sanctions imposed in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine for preventing maintenance of the Nord Stream pipeline.

European governments say Moscow [is deliberately stoking energy prices](#) to raise the political costs of their military involvement with Kyiv and weaken voters' support for Ukraine. European governments and industry have been able to sock away more natural gas than some analysts had expected over the summer—[protecting the continent](#) from the threat of imminent large-scale shortages—but worries for the winter remain high.

In a sign of the potential risks, an estimated 70,000 people took to the streets of Prague on Saturday in protest against the Czech government, calling on the ruling coalition to do more to curb energy prices and voicing opposition to the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Organized by several far-right and fringe political groups, the demonstration called for the Central European nation to be militarily neutral and ensure direct contracts with gas suppliers, including Russia.

Gazprom said on Friday it had found a technical fault during maintenance of the Nord Stream pipeline, which connects Russia with Germany under the Baltic Sea. The pipeline, which had been due to resume operation on Saturday after three days of maintenance, will remain closed until the issue is fixed, the company said, without giving any timeline. Before the maintenance, the pipeline was operating at 20% of its capacity.

The announcement came hours after the Group of Seven wealthy nations [agreed to an oil-price cap](#) for Russian crude. That would force buyers seeking to insure their shipment via insurers located in a G-7 or EU country to observe the price limit on their purchases.

The cap, whose level will be set at a future meeting, originated in a U.S. initiative and has been under discussion for months. Moscow has said countries imposing a cap won't receive any Russian oil, sales of which make up a far bigger share of its state revenues than those of natural gas.

Surging gas prices have spurred European governments to scale back their dependence on Russian gas ahead of the winter months, potentially undermining Moscow's leverage in the long run. In the short term, however, it could force them to ration energy—a move that would [hurt industrial companies](#) and tip the continent's already fragile economy into a recession.

Fresh evidence of the dangers came Saturday, when Swedish and Finnish government officials vowed to provide liquidity to Nordic power-market players should they need it after Gazprom's move.

Germany on Sunday unveiled its third energy-crisis relief package this year, valued at 65 billion euros, or about \$64.72 billion, to shield consumers from soaring prices over the winter. "Our country is facing a difficult time," Chancellor Olaf Scholz said. "We will not abandon anyone. We will get through this winter."

Six months into the war, Kyiv is also under pressure to show its Western partners it can turn military backing into gains on the battlefield. While Western weapons shipments have helped Ukrainian forces slow Russia's advance in the east, Ukraine has yet to retake significant territory in an offensive operation.

After weeks of speculation about an offensive in the south, Ukraine intensified attacks over the past week along the front with Russia around the regional capital Kherson. It is not clear whether Ukrainian forces have made meaningful progress because Kyiv has maintained a high level of operational secrecy and restricted journalists' access to the front line.

Ukrainian officials say the battles have yielded breakthroughs and the recapture of some villages. An immediate retaking of Kherson isn't Kyiv's objective, officials say. Russian officials have said the Ukrainian offensive has failed.

	<p>The threat of a Ukrainian push in the south has drawn Russian forces away from the east, which became the focus of Moscow's war effort after fierce resistance by Ukrainian forces around the capital, Kyiv, compelled Russian troops to abandon an assault there in March.</p> <p>Oryx, an open-source intelligence tracker, now has more than 1,000 Russian tanks visually confirmed to have been destroyed since Russia began its large-scale invasion on Feb. 24.</p> <p>While the front lines have moved relatively little, Russian missiles continue to rain down daily on Ukrainian cities. In the south, the head of the Mykolaiv regional military administration, Vitaliy Kim, said fresh strikes overnight had inflicted significant damage on medical facilities, a museum and educational institutions. The northeastern city of Kharkiv was also hit, according to Mayor Ihor Terekhov.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/04 Federal oil leases slow to a trickle
SOURCE	https://www.wsj.com/articles/federal-oil-leases-slow-to-a-trickle-under-biden-11662230816?mod=hp_lead_pos1
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON—The Biden administration has leased fewer acres for oil-and-gas drilling offshore and on federal land than any other administration in its early stages dating back to the end of World War II, according to a Wall Street Journal analysis.</p> <p>President Biden's Interior Department leased 126,228 acres for drilling through Aug. 20, his first 19 months in office, the analysis found. No other president since Richard Nixon in 1969-70 leased out fewer than 4.4 million acres at this stage in his first term.</p> <p>Harry Truman was the last president to lease out fewer acres—65,658—in 1945-46, when offshore drilling was just beginning and the federal government didn't yet control the deep-water leases that have made up the largest part of the federal oil-and-gas program in modern times.</p> <p>Mr. Biden pledged to stop drilling on federal lands as a candidate, saying the nation needs to transition to clean energy. He softened his stance as oil prices soared following Russia's invasion of Ukraine—calling for boosting oil supplies to ease runaway inflation—but he has nonetheless spurned a leasing program that for decades has been a go-to asset for presidents looking to raise U.S. energy production.</p> <p>“The president said he was going to stop leasing. And he's been remarkably successful,” said David Bernhardt, an energy lawyer and former Interior secretary in the Trump administration.</p> <p>The program had already been in a long decline as oil-and-gas companies shied away from offshore drilling and federal lands amid the boom in fracking shale. Under Mr. Biden's stewardship the decline has quickened, with leasing down 97% from the first 19 months of his predecessor Donald Trump's term.</p> <p>The Journal's analysis, based on Bureau of Land Management and Bureau of Ocean Energy Management data, quantifies the slowdown in onshore and offshore leasing under Mr. Biden. It doesn't include land leased in Alaska since the late 1990s, little of which fell into the periods analyzed.</p> <p>The Interior Department, which oversees oil leases, said it issued a record high number of drilling permits for existing leases last year. Department spokeswoman Melissa Schwartz said industry trends have driven most U.S. production to private and state-owned lands, and that of the roughly 35 million acres now leased from the federal government, about 60% isn't actively producing.</p> <p>“There is no shortage of opportunity to produce oil from federal lands,” Ms. Schwartz said.</p> <p>White House spokesman Abdullah Hasan said the administration is “making America a magnet for clean energy manufacturing investment, securing America's clean energy future, and putting us on track to meet our climate goals” while still producing near-record amounts of oil.</p>

Mr. Biden has said repeatedly that the U.S. needs to transition away from fossil fuels to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions that contribute to climate change.

“No more drilling on federal lands, no more drilling including offshore—no ability for the oil industry to continue to drill—period,” [Mr. Biden said](#) when he ran for office.

During his first week in office, Mr. Biden imposed an indefinite moratorium on new leases, and Interior required additional reviews on drilling permits for the next 60 days. Since then, the administration has tried only one offshore sale, which [was invalidated by a court](#) in January. It resumed onshore leasing this summer following a June 2021 ruling by a federal judge in Louisiana [that the president’s moratorium was unlawful](#).

The Mineral Leasing Act of 1920 requires onshore oil and gas leasing “at least quarterly.” While the Biden administration has been in office for six quarters, it has conducted auctions in just one of them. That happened in late June, after the administration came under increasing pressure to tame soaring gasoline prices at the pump in the wake of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

Former presidents Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan boosted leasing to record highs in the 1970s and early ’80s in response to geopolitical oil crises. Mr. Reagan still holds the record, leasing nearly 48 million acres in his first 19 months, almost three times as much as any other president.

In 2009, the first year under former President Barack Obama, whom Mr. Biden served as vice president, Interior held 35 onshore oil- and gas-lease sales, according to a department release from 2010. In its first year, the Biden administration had none.

“Stepping up domestic production has been a priority of every president from Nixon right up through Obama and of course Trump,” said Daniel Yergin, the vice chairman of S&P Global and a noted oil-industry historian. “Whether Democrats or Republicans, presidents have wanted to embrace the idea of energy independence and production.”

[The Inflation Reduction Act](#), signed into law by Mr. Biden on Aug. 16, requires the Interior Department to offer at least 2 million acres of federal land and 60 million offshore acres [to oil and gas producers every year](#) for the next decade. Those requirements must be met for an administration to permit some wind-power and solar-power development.

That still gives the Biden administration or others wiggle room if they want to stymie oil and gas, say lawyers and analysts. One tactic could be offering areas unappealing to the industry, they say. The administration could also simply forgo wind and solar development on federal territory.

The Interior Department said that it is committed to abiding by terms of the Inflation Reduction Act, “including direction regarding the federal oil and gas programs.”

Federal leases account for more than a quarter of all U.S. oil production. Crude production offshore and on federal lands hit a record high in 2021, according to Interior Department data that dates back through 2003.

So far, the drop-off in new leases hasn’t been a factor in the supply issues that helped [send gasoline and other energy prices](#) to historic highs earlier this year, since oil typically takes years to reach the market after federal leases are approved, analysts say.

Even so, new leases are needed to maintain supply later, potentially helpful in averting future shortages and price surges, energy industry leaders say.

“The leases are kind of our raw material,” said Stephen Green, who oversees exploration and production for [Chevron](#) Corp. in North America. “Chevron or the industry needs a predictable source of raw material.”

Mr. Biden entered office at a tumultuous time in the history of the federal oil-and-gas program, when development faces conflicting pressures from environmentalists and industry.

Environmentalists want Mr. Biden to fulfill his pledge to stop federal oil-and-gas leases to shift the country away from fossil fuels that create greenhouse-gas emissions.

Federal territory “seems to be the last place where we want accelerated oil and gas drilling,” said Andrew Wetzler, the chief program officer at the Natural Resources Defense Council, who commended the administration for its leasing slowdown. “It certainly is a dramatic change and it’s a very welcome one.”

Oil companies say Mr. Biden’s slowdown has gone too far. The sharp rise in energy prices has put pressure on Mr. Biden to take steps to boost oil output and bring oil prices down to tame inflation.

Within weeks of the Ukraine invasion and pump prices soaring to historic highs, the administration said on April 15 that it would restart the onshore leasing program but with a higher royalty rate charged to oil drillers.

After 17 months of no onshore lease sales, it held five June 29-30.

In all, the Interior Department has awarded 203 leases for oil and gas development during Mr. Biden’s first 19 months in office. Former presidents Trump and Obama each approved 10 times as many leases during the same period, the Journal’s analysis shows.

Going back further, the 203 leases under Mr. Biden amount to 3.2% of what presidents from Dwight Eisenhower to Mr. Trump awarded on average in the same span.

For offshore drilling, the Biden administration has yet to complete a sale.

It did hold one, on Nov. 17, offering 80 million acres in the Gulf of Mexico in a sale originally proposed by the Trump administration that would have been the largest offshore sale in U.S. history. It sold 1.7 million acres, but a federal judge invalidated the sale in January, ruling that the administration failed to do a proper environmental analysis.

The Biden administration declined to appeal the decision, letting the sale get canceled.

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HEADLINE	09/04 Day 193 of the Russia invasion
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/sep/04/russia-ukraine-war-latest-what-we-know-on-day-193-of-the-invasion
GIST	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant has been disconnected from its last remaining main power line to the grid and is relying on a reserve line, the International Atomic Energy Agency said. Previously, there had been reports the plant in south-eastern Ukraine had been knocked offline in the early hours of Saturday amid sustained shelling that destroyed a key power line, according to local Russian-backed authorities.• Sweden has said it would provide liquidity guarantees to Nordic and Baltic energy companies worth “billions of dollars” in an effort to prevent a financial crisis sparked by Europe’s energy crunch.• The Russian energy company Gazprom has said Siemens Energy is ready to help repair broken equipment for the Nord Stream 1 gas pipeline, but claimed there was nowhere available for them to carry out the work.• The European Union expects Russia to respect existing energy contracts but is prepared to meet the challenge if it fails to do so, the economic commissioner, Paolo Gentiloni, said.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gazprom’s announcement that the Nord Stream pipeline 1 would not restart came after G7 finance ministers said they planned to implement a price cap on Russian oil to reduce “Russia’s ability to fund its war of aggression”. • Turkey’s president, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, has told Vladimir Putin that his country can play a facilitator role regarding the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant, according to his office. • An eight-year-old child has died after Russian shelling in the southern Ukrainian region of Mykolaiv on Sunday morning, according to the head of the regional council, Hanna Zamazeyeva. Two other children were among those injured in Russian shelling in the city of Mykolaiv and Berezhniv, she said in an update on Telegram. • Russian troops launched overnight rocket attacks on Kramatorsk and Sloviansk in eastern Ukraine, according to the governor of the Donetsk region, Pavlo Kyrylenko. • The leader of Chechnya has reportedly said he plans to take an “indefinite and long” break from his post. In a video posted to his Telegram, Ramzan Kadyrov, 45, reportedly said he believed the “time has come” for him to leave. • The former Russian president Dmitry Medvedev has accused the west of playing a “chess game with death” in its support of Ukraine and accused western countries of trying to take advantage of the conflict to push Russia to “a new round of disintegration”. • Ukrainian forces have “likely achieved a degree of tactical surprise” with the ongoing counter-offensive, the UK’s Ministry of Defence has said. In its daily intelligence briefing, it said Ukraine had done so by taking advantage of “poor logistics, administration and leadership” in Russia’s military. • Ukraine’s first lady, Olena Zelenska, has said in a BBC interview that while the economic impact of the war in Ukraine is tough on its allies, Britons “count pennies” while Ukrainians “count casualties”. • Russians paid their final respects to Mikhail Gorbachev, the last leader of the Soviet Union, in a ceremony held in Moscow without much fanfare and with President Vladimir Putin notably absent. Hungary’s prime minister, Viktor Orbán, travelled to Moscow to pay his respects.
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HEADLINE	09/03 Teacher shortages Poland, Hungary
SOURCE	https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/sep/3/teacher-shortages-grow-worrisome-in-poland-and-hun/
GIST	<p>WARSAW, Poland (AP) — Ewa Jaworska has been a teacher since 2008 and loves working with young people. But the low pay is leaving her demoralized. She even has to buy her own teaching materials sometimes, and is disheartened by the government using schools to promote conservative ideas which she sees as backward.</p> <p>Like many other Polish teachers she is considering a career change.</p> <p>“I keep hoping that the situation might still change,” said the 44-year-old, who teaches in a Warsaw high school. “But unfortunately it is changing for the worse, so only time will tell if this year will be my last.”</p> <p>Problems are mounting in schools in Poland, with a teacher shortage growing worse and many educators and parents fearing that the educational system is being used to indoctrinate young people into the ruling party’s conservative and nationalistic vision.</p> <p>It’s very much the same in Hungary. Black-clad teachers in Budapest carried black umbrellas to protest stagnant wages and heavy workloads on the first day of school Thursday. Teachers’ union PSZ said young teachers earn a “humiliating” monthly after-tax salary of just 500 euros (dollars) that has prompted many to walk away.</p> <p>Thousands of people marched in solidarity with teachers on Friday in Budapest, voicing the view that the teachers’ low compensation is linked to the authoritarian direction of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s government.</p> <p>“Free country, free education!” they shouted,</p>

Teacher shortages could hardly come at a worse time, with both countries trying to integrate Ukrainian refugees. It's particularly challenging for Poland, where hundreds of thousands of school-aged Ukrainian refugees now live.

Nearly 200,000 Ukrainian students, most of whom do not speak Polish, already entered Polish schools after the war began on Feb. 24. The education minister has said the overall number of Ukrainian students could triple this coming school year, depending on how the war unfolds.

Andrzej Wyrozembski, the principal of the high school in Warsaw's Zoliborz district where Jaworska works, has set up two classes for 50 Ukrainians in his school. He said his Ukrainian students who arrived in the spring are quickly learning Polish, a related Slavic language. The real difficulty is finding teachers, particularly for physics, chemistry, computer science, and even for Polish.

Across central Europe, government wages haven't kept pace with the private sector, leaving teachers, nurses and others with far less purchasing power.

The situation is expected to grow worse as many teachers near retirement and ever fewer young people choose the poorly paid profession, especially when inflation has exploded to 16% in Poland and nearly 14% in Hungary.

According to the Polish teachers' union, schools in the country are short 20,000 teachers. Hungary, with a much smaller population, has a 16,000-teacher shortage.

"We don't have young teachers," said Slawomir Broniarz, the president of the Polish Teachers' Trade Union, or ZNP, citing the starting salary of 3,400 zlotys (\$720) pre-tax as the key reason.

Polish Education Minister Przemyslaw Czarnek has disputed the figures, saying teacher vacancies were closer to 13,000, adding it isn't a huge number in proportion to the 700,000 teachers nationwide. He accuses the union and political opposition of exaggerating the problem.

Many educators strongly oppose the conservative ideology of the nationalist government and Czarnek himself, viewing him as a Catholic fundamentalist. His appointment in 2020 sparked protests because he had said LGBTQ people aren't equal to "normal people" and that a woman's main role is to have children.

Criticism has recently focused on a new school textbook on contemporary history. It has a section on ideologies that presents liberalism and feminism alongside Nazism. A section interpreted as denouncing in-vitro fertilization was so controversial that it was removed.

In Hungary, Erzsebet Nagy, a committee member of the Democratic Union of Hungarian Teachers, said teachers have been leaving the profession "in droves."

"Young people aren't coming into the profession, and very few of those who earn a teaching certificate from high school or university go on to teach," said Nagy. "Even if they do, most of them leave within two years."

Hungarian unions have also complained about the centralization of the country's education system. Curriculums, textbooks and all decision-making are controlled by a central body formed in 2012 by Hungary's nationalist government.

"Our professional autonomy is continually being eliminated," said Nagy. "We have no freedom to choose textbooks. There are only two to choose from in each subject and both are of terrible quality. They've blocked the possibility for a free intellectual life."

Worried about their children's futures, families are rejecting the public schools. New private schools are opening but they still can't meet the demand.

	<p>Polish architect Piotr Polatynski was ready to take a second job just to pay private school tuition for his fourth-grade daughter. But as a new school year began this week, a lack of places in private schools forced him and his wife to send her back to a public neighborhood school, which they feel isn't providing the kind of education his daughter deserves.</p> <p>He still hopes a spot might still open up somewhere as he fumes over the state of the education system.</p> <p>"We don't believe that the current government is capable of making changes that would encourage young people to enter the teaching profession and bring any kind of meaningful energy to this whole system," he said.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/03 Thousands protest against Czech govt
SOURCE	https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/sep/3/tens-of-thousands-protest-against-czech-government/
GIST	<p>PRAGUE (AP) —Tens of thousands of protesters from the far right and far left joined forces to rally against the country's pro-Western Czech government in the capital on Saturday.</p> <p>Police estimated that the crowd at Prague's central Wenceslas Square numbered around 70,000.</p> <p>Some of the groups represented at the demonstration included the major anti-migrant populist Freedom and Direct Democracy party and the Communist Party.</p> <p>The protesters demanded the resignation of the current coalition government led by conservative Prime Minister Petr Fiala, criticizing it for a number of issues, including its Western-oriented policies.</p> <p>They condemned the government for its support of the sanctions against Russia over its war in Ukraine and accused it of not being able to tackle soaring energy prices. The demonstrators also criticized NATO, and the European Union and the 27-nation bloc's plan to cut greenhouse gas emissions and reach climate neutrality. The country belongs to both organizations.</p> <p>Fiala said everyone has a right to demonstrate, but said those protesting are expressing pro-Russia views "that are not in the interest of the Czech Republic and our citizens."</p> <p>The Czech Republic firmly supports Ukraine in its battle against Russia's invasion and has donated arms, including heavy weapons, to the Ukrainian armed forces.</p> <p>The government is planning to call an emergency meeting of EU countries next week to seek a united approach to the energy crisis. The Czech Republic currently holds the bloc's rotating presidency.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/03 Uvalde school children grapple with trauma
SOURCE	https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/sep/3/uvalde-children-grapple-with-trauma-after-school-m/
GIST	<p>UVALDE, Texas (AP) — One girl runs and hides when she sees thin people with long hair similar to the gunman who stormed into her Uvalde school and killed 21 people. One boy stopped making friends and playing with animals. A third child feels her heart race when she's reminded of the May 24 massacre that killed a close friend - once at such a dangerous pace that she had to be rushed to a hospital, where she stayed for weeks.</p> <p>The 11-year-old girl has been diagnosed with anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder. She and her family spoke to The Associated Press on condition her name not be used to protect her identity.</p> <p>"I never lost someone before," she said, adding that her friend who was among the 19 students and two teachers killed in the United States' deadliest school massacre in a decade would encourage her through hard times. "She was a very strong person."</p>

As students get ready to return to school in Uvalde on Tuesday for the first time since the massacre at Robb Elementary, PTSD symptoms are starting to show. Parents are finding themselves unable to help, and experts worry because communities of color such as the largely Hispanic city of Uvalde face disparities in access mental health care. For low-income families, it can be even harder, as access to limited resources requires long waits for referrals through medical assistance programs such as Medicaid.

“It’s hard hearing what these kids are going through at such a young age,” said Yuri Castro, a mother of two boys in Uvalde, whose cousin was killed in the shooting and whose sons were once taught by the two slain teachers. Castro knows of children so traumatized they have stopped speaking.

School shootings dramatically upend survivors’ lives. For some, symptoms linger for years and high-quality treatment can be difficult to find.

In recent years, Texas lawmakers have focused on spending money on mental health services, devoting more than \$2.5 billion during the current fiscal year.

But according to the 11-year-old girl’s family - lifelong residents of Uvalde - the only mental health center in the area - just blocks from Robb Elementary - was seldom used or discussed, raising worries about the lack of awareness regarding signs and symptoms of mental illness and the stigma surrounding seeking help.

The mother of the 11-year-old girl whose racing heart led to her hospitalization says open conversations about mental health were previously taboo in the heavily Latino community, where culturally, mental health is brushed off as feeling lazy, bored or throwing a tantrum.

“I remember growing up it was like, ‘Go over there, you are just being chiflada,’” the mother said, using a Spanish word that means “acting spoiled.”

Now, she said, the town is waking up to the reality of mental health even as some people still ask why survivors like her daughter need help.

Members of the community have been supporting one another by checking in with extended family and friends and taking advantage of community resources that have been set up, including counseling by the Red Cross and emotional support from the churches. The parents of one of the children who was killed started an organization that will be putting together wilderness retreats for victims’ families and survivors. Residents also have social media groups where they can share mental health resources and express their grief.

The Texas Health and Human Services Commission contracted with organizations to create a mental health hotline that in six weeks responded to nearly 400 calls.

Martha Rodriguez, who coordinated efforts to help students recover after the mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, said officials need to visit the community to make sure the right resources are available. She said addressing stigmas and sending providers who understand the families’ language and values are key.

“Some families may not feel comfortable sharing distress and needs,” she said.

Many families impacted by the shooting are Roman Catholic. The mother of a girl who survived the attack said her daughter has only been able to open up to a priest in Houston - 280 miles (450 kilometers) away - whom the family goes to see when they visit relatives.

“This is going to be a long journey. This is not going to be something that we can just do some work and fix it,” said San Antonio Archbishop Gustavo García-Siller.

Julie Kaplow, director of the trauma and grief centers at the Texas Children's Hospital and Children's Hospital New Orleans, said many students who survived the May 2018 Santa Fe High School shooting that killed 10 in suburban Houston did not exhibit symptoms for six months.

"I am anticipating that we will see some similarities," said Kaplow, who has been training clinicians and others who are treating families in Uvalde. "Part of the reason is those symptoms haven't manifested yet and will start to manifest when they are reminded of the event itself. Or the caregiver starts to recognize, 'Wait a minute my child is still not eating, is still not sleeping.'"

The length of treatment varies depending on the severity of symptoms. For some, it can last up to two to three years.

Melissa Brymer, director of terrorism and disaster programs at the UCLA-Duke National Center for Child Traumatic Stress, was the lead adviser to public schools in Newtown, Connecticut, after the massacre at Sandy Hook Elementary in 2012. She said officials need to make sure that families can get services at school. They also need to create spaces that feel friendlier, such as community meals, rather than clinics.

Parents of the incoming fifth-grader who is struggling with symptoms chose to home-school her this year so she can continue going to appointments more easily. She is also getting a service dog who will alert her if her heart rate rises.

But she worries about her brothers returning to the classroom and gets anxious thinking others will judge her because of how she has been affected by the massacre when she wasn't shot, her mother said. She is awakened daily by night terrors.

"We don't sleep. ... We don't even know what that is anymore since this has happened," the mother said. "I am going to have to deal with that for however long it takes for her to heal."

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HEADLINE	09/03 Russia postpones resuming gas flow
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/03/world/europe/eu-germany-russia-natural-gas.html
GIST	<p>BERLIN — European officials have expressed confidence that they can endure a winter with limited Russian energy, as Moscow postponed restarting the flow of natural gas to Germany through a closely watched pipeline.</p> <p>The European Union has been preparing for the possibility that Russia may cut gas deliveries in retaliation for European opposition to Moscow's invasion of Ukraine. Under the long tenure of President Vladimir V. Putin, Russia has wielded its energy supply in myriad ways for foreign policy gains, often in efforts to seek leverage over European policies by turning off the gas spigot in the wintertime.</p> <p>The E.U.'s economy commissioner, Paolo Gentiloni, said Saturday that the bloc was "well prepared to resist Russia's extreme use of the gas weapon," according to Reuters.</p> <p>"We are not afraid of Putin's decisions, we are asking the Russians to respect contracts, but if they don't, we are ready to react," he said on the sidelines of an economic forum in Italy.</p> <p>Germany, in particular, has imposed tough energy-saving measures.</p> <p>"Even if things get really tight again with deliveries from Russia, we'll most likely get through the winter," Olaf Scholz, the German chancellor, said in an interview with the WAZ, a regional daily, that was published on Friday and that he posted to his Twitter account on Saturday morning.</p> <p>The German ministry overseeing gas deliveries noted that Germany's gas storage is already nearly 85 percent full, a target set for the beginning of October.</p>

And while Germany was getting 55 percent of its natural gas from Russia in February, when Russia first attacked Ukraine, Russian gas accounted for around 10 percent of Germany's gas mix on Tuesday — the last full day when gas flowed through the Nord Stream 1 pipeline — thanks to months of sourcing gas from other countries. Currently, Germany receives the bulk of its natural gas from Norway, the Netherlands and Belgium.

“We have noted Russia's unreliability in recent weeks and accordingly we have continued — undeterred and consistently — with our measures to strengthen our independence from Russian energy imports,” a spokeswoman for the German ministry responsible for energy said in a statement on Friday. “As a result, we are now much better equipped than we were a few months ago.”

Among the host of energy-saving rules mandated by the government to prepare are regulations that came into force Sept. 1 and which state that most public buildings can only be heated to 66 degrees Fahrenheit and cannot be externally lit after 10 p.m. But officials note that the situation is still tense and that gas savings are very much required.

“I don't want to be misunderstood; this is not yet the ‘all clear’ signal,” Robert Habeck, the energy minister, said on Wednesday.

Gazprom, the Russian-owned energy giant, had been expected to resume the flow of gas through the Nord Stream 1 pipeline on Saturday after three days of maintenance. But hours before, it said that it had found oil leaks around a turbine used to pressurize the pipeline, forcing it to call off the restart. It did not give a timeline for restarting.

The gas giant said on Saturday that Siemens Energy, the German company that built the turbine, was going to help repair the broken equipment. But Robin Zimmermann, a spokesman for the company, said that as of Friday night it had not received any such request.

Siemens also does not believe that the claimed leak would be enough to force a full shutdown of the turbine, the company said. “From our technical understanding as the manufacturer of the turbine, what was found yesterday is no reason to let the turbine stand still,” Mr. Zimmerman said.

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HEADLINE	09/04 Russia uses low tech in high-tech weapons
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/04/us/politics/russia-missiles-ukraine.html
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON — As Russian forces fire precision-guided weapons at military and civilian targets in Ukraine, officers in Ukraine's security service working with private analysts have collected parts of the crashed missiles to unravel their enemy's secrets.</p> <p>The weapons are top of the line in the Russian arsenal. But they contained fairly low-tech components, analysts who examined them said, including a unique but basic satellite navigation system that was also found in other captured munitions.</p> <p>Those findings are detailed in a new report issued Saturday by Conflict Armament Research, an independent group based in Britain that identifies and tracks weapons and ammunition used in wars around the world. The research team examined the Russian matériel in July at the invitation of the Ukrainian government.</p> <p>The report undercuts Moscow's narrative of having a domestically rebuilt military that again rivals that of its Western adversaries.</p> <p>But it also shows that the weapons Russia is using to destroy Ukrainian towns and cities are often powered by Western innovation, despite sanctions imposed against Russia after it invaded Crimea in 2014. Those restrictions were intended to stop the shipment of high-tech items that could help Russia's military abilities.</p>

“We saw that Russia reuses the same electronic components across multiple weapons, including their newest cruise missiles and attack helicopters, and we didn’t expect to see that,” said Damien Spleeters, an investigator for the group who contributed to the report. “Russian guided weapons are full of non-Russian technology and components, and most of the computer chips we documented were made by Western countries after 2014.”

How Russia obtained these parts is unclear. Mr. Spleeters is asking the manufacturers of the semiconductors how their goods ended up in Russian weapons, whether through legitimate transactions or straw-man purchases set up to skirt the sanctions.

The investigators analyzed the remains of three types of [Russian cruise missiles](#) — including Moscow’s newest and most advanced model, the Kh-101 — and its newest guided rocket, the Tornado-S. All of them contained identical components marked SN-99 that on close inspection, the team said, proved to be satellite navigation receivers that are critical for the missiles’ operation.

Mr. Spleeters said that Russia’s use of the same components pointed to bottlenecks in its supply chain and that restricting the supply of SN-99 components would slow Moscow’s ability to replenish its diminishing stockpile of guided weapons.

“If you want to have effective control and make sure that the Russians can’t get their hands on them, you need to know what the Russians need and what they use,” Mr. Spleeters said. “Then it’s important to know how they got it — what networks? What suppliers did they use?”

The investigators found an overall reliance by Russian engineers on certain semiconductors from specific Western manufacturers, not just in munitions but also in surveillance drones, communications equipment, helicopter avionics and other military goods.

“Over time, the Russians kept going back to the same manufacturers,” Mr. Spleeters said. “Once you know that, it gets easier to target those networks.”

“Looking at the computer chips in the same positions across multiple circuit boards, they were always made by the same manufacturers,” he said. “You’d have different dates of production, but always the same manufacturer.”

The report also revealed sharp differences between Russia’s top-shelf weapons and those that Ukrainian forces have received from the United States.

Warring parties often examine captured military hardware for intelligence value. But the investigators said they were shocked by Russia’s apparent indifference to having so many weapons that an adversary could potentially reverse-engineer.

“This is late 1990s or a mid-2000s level of technology at best,” Arsenio Menendez, a NASA contractor who reverse-engineers guided weapon components as a hobby, said after examining photos of Russian military electronics taken by the researchers. “It’s basically the equivalent of an Xbox 360 video game console, and it looks like it’s open to anyone who wants to take it apart and build their own copy of it.”

By comparison, the U.S. Defense Department has standards that military contractors must follow to make it harder for adversarial nation-states to build their own versions of captured weapons.

To protect this operational knowledge, which the Pentagon refers to with the anodyne term “critical program information,” military directives require the use of anti-tampering technologies meant to secure the lines of computer code and instructions that tell a weapon how to find its target.

	<p>Publicly released Pentagon directives provide only an outline of the program's scope and requirements, and further details are classified. Military officials declined to discuss any anti-tampering technologies that the Defense Department may require.</p> <p>"You can build a mesh around a computer chip that if probed will delete the contents," Mr. Menendez said, adding that such protections were used in commercial goods like credit card readers to reduce theft and fraud.</p> <p>The Russian navigation system resembles the open-source architecture of GPS receivers, which is not subject to federal restrictions regarding the sale and export of defense articles, he said.</p> <p>"A team of college electrical engineering majors could build this," he said.</p> <p>The hodgepodge of parts that Russia uses to build its guided weapons may also help explain why its cruise missiles are sometimes not very accurate, Mr. Menendez said.</p> <p>Errors made by nonstandard GPS units in processing satellite signals can ultimately cause a cruise missile to miss its target by a wide margin.</p> <p>The Russian approach to weapons electronics appears to be "if you can't keep up, steal the tech and do your best with it," Mr. Menendez said.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/04 Oregon gov. emergency conflagration act
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/gov-brown-sends-state-resources-to-wildfire-in-northeast-oregon/
GIST	<p>IMNAHA, Ore. (AP) — Gov. Kate Brown on Saturday invoked the emergency conflagration act in response to a wildfire in remote northeastern Oregon that has grown rapidly and is prompting evacuations.</p> <p>The Double Creek Fire near the community of Innaha in the Hells Canyon National Recreation Area grew to about 15.6 square miles (40.4 square kilometers) overnight into Saturday, according to the Oregon State Fire Marshal's Office. The fire was detected on Tuesday and started by lightning.</p> <p>"With many fires actively burning across the state and several weeks of peak fire season ahead of us, I am urging all Oregonians to be prepared," Brown said in a statement. "Please continue to follow local and statewide fire prevention regulations and share what you know with others. Every fire we prevent helps keep our communities and firefighters safe, and our natural resources protected."</p> <p>Brown's declaration allows the fire marshal to take command and send other agency resources to help local firefighters battling the blaze. Firefighters have been working to suppress the fire with helicopter and air tanker support, officials said.</p> <p>The Wallowa County Sheriff's Office has issued evacuation notices including those telling people to leave their homes immediately.</p> <p>State officials said air quality near the blaze was in the unhealthy range on Saturday.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/05 Police: back to school photos reminder
SOURCE	https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/parents-think-before-you-post-back-to-school-photos/SKYICNMNM5ALDOXBUG6FWPM3F4/

GIST	<p>As school starts again for children across the state, the Puyallup Police Department has a reminder for parents posting photos of their young ones on social media.</p> <p>Parents should remember not to reveal personal information about their children in photos.</p> <p>Information like a school's name, grade, age, teacher and more can be used by predators and scammers.</p> <p>Privacy settings can alleviate some concerns; however, once photos are out there, parents can't control how they are shared and saved.</p> <p>Other items to look out for are house numbers, license plates or other possible identifying information that could be in the background of your photos.</p> <p>The Puyallup Police Department suggests keeping personal information to a minimum.</p> <p>Parents also suggest not putting your child's name on the outside of their backpack or jacket, as strangers can call your child and the child may feel the stranger knows them.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/05 Cyberattack hits L.A. school district
SOURCE	https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2022-09-05/lausd-cyberattack-takes-down-la-unified-operations-schools-will-open-on-tuesday
GIST	<p>A cyberattack brought down the computer systems of the Los Angeles Unified School District over the weekend, but officials said late Monday night that schools would open as scheduled Tuesday morning.</p> <p>The attack took the district's website offline, eliminated access to email and reportedly affected systems that teachers use to post lessons and take attendance.</p> <p>"Since the identification of the incident, which is likely criminal in nature, we continue to assess the situation with law enforcement agencies," the district stated in a release. "While the investigation continues, Los Angeles Unified has swiftly implemented a response protocol to mitigate districtwide disruptions, including access to email, computer systems and applications."</p> <p>Officials said they are working around the clock to solve the problem before Tuesday morning, when school resumes after the Labor Day holiday.</p> <p>"Business operations may be delayed or modified," the district stated. However, "based on a preliminary analysis of critical business systems, employee healthcare and payroll are not impacted. Nor has the cyber incident impacted safety and emergency mechanisms in place at schools."</p> <p>Federal officials are helping the district investigate and respond.</p> <p>"The White House brought together the Department of Education, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Department of Homeland Security's Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) to provide rapid, incident response support to Los Angeles Unified, building on the immediate support by local law enforcement agencies," the district announcement said.</p> <p>Until late Monday night, no information from the district indicated what was causing the problems. By that time, teachers, parents and students were posting all over social media about technical issues.</p> <p>In recent times, hackers have targeted businesses and public agencies, including schools — seeking ransom or simply to cause mayhem. A notable local attack targeted the Newhall school system in 2020.</p> <p>The nation's second-largest school system has had a few major internal computer fails — especially related to intended upgrades. In one instance, the payroll system malfunctioned, resulting in</p>

underpayments and overpayments that took years to resolve. In another episode, a [new student information system](#) made students' academic records and class schedules unavailable.

Before the nature of the attack was made clear, a post on the local Parents Supporting Teachers Facebook page suggested making the best of the situation:

"LAUSD staff who thought they'd get some work done today are forced to relax due to a districtwide outage. Enjoy it!"

Parents and teachers reported a variety of problems on social media.

"Apparently everyone I've talked to/texted with says when they try to log on they are being instructed to change their Google password, saying it's outdated... then when they do, it locks them out," one person reported.

A teacher posted: "Everything that requires an lausd log-[in] is down for the count!!"

Other staff members also reported, referring to the Schoology system that is integral to posting and receiving assignments:

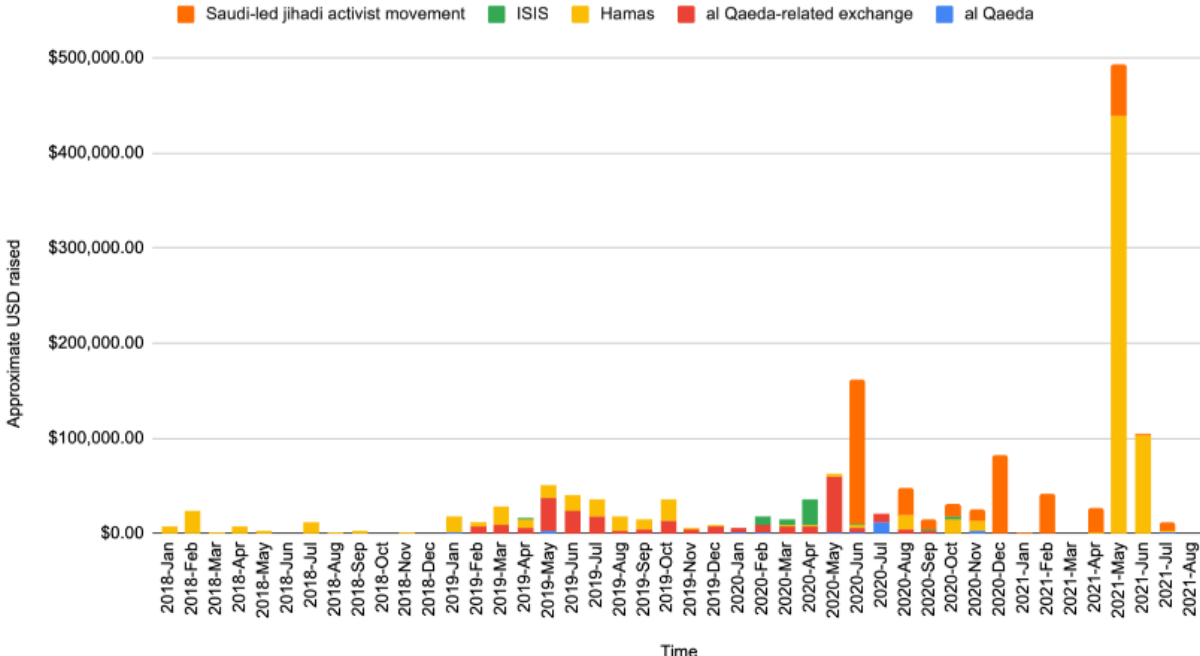
"My computer was logged into both schoology and my drive (before outage) and I have access. I can't get into other sites and I'm not logging out for fear of being locked out."

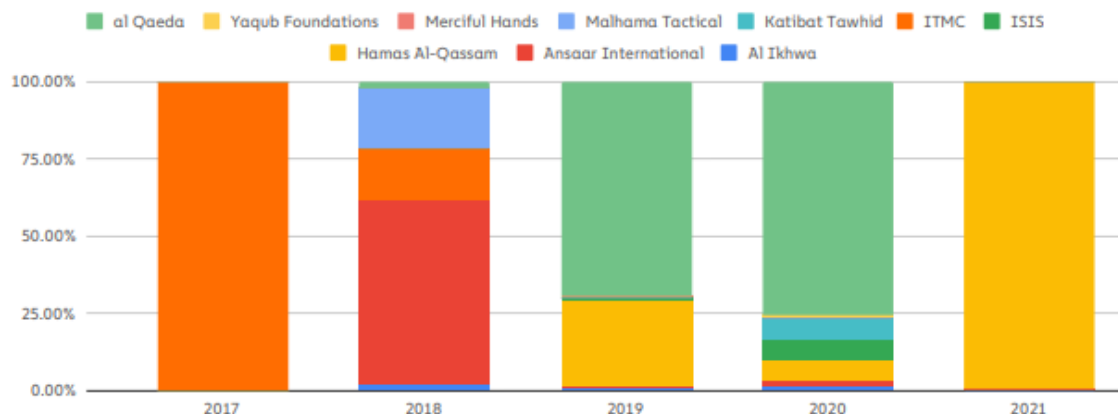
Another teacher had been planning to catch up on Monday: "Confession... I didn't finish my lesson plans. The only good thing is that I have my Teacher guides downloaded, and all my slides."

Said another: "EVERYTHING is on google drive. This is very frustrating. Praying my drive is restored!"

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HEADLINE	09/04 Hackers leak Mossad chief medical files
SOURCE	https://www.i24news.tv/en/news/israel/defense/1662316309-iranian-hackers-publish-mossad-chief-s-medical-records
GIST	<p>Leaked files were revealed ahead of Barnea's flight to the US for a series of meetings on Iran nuclear deal</p> <p>A group of hackers linked to Iran on Sunday published personal photos and medical records of Israel's Mossad intelligence agency chief David Barnea.</p> <p>The materials allegedly obtained from his wife's cell phone were revealed ahead of Barnea's flight to Washington Monday for a series of meetings with senior US officials on the revival of the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran, which the Mossad chief strongly opposes.</p> <p>The leaked files published in the group's Telegram account include blood tests, medical examinations and even a photo of Barnea from the 2016 Judo Championship in Tel Aviv. Last week the same hackers published an apparent photo from a dental appointment.</p> <p>Earlier in March, the same Telegram account published other personal documents allegedly belonging to the Mossad chief. While Israel claimed these were old materials obtained from the phone of Barnea's wife, the leak also included a pay stub from 2020.</p> <p>On Wednesday, Barnea met with Israel's Prime Minister Yair Lapid to discuss his upcoming trip to the US and talks on the emerging nuclear agreement between Iran and world powers.</p> <p>Israeli officials have repeatedly urged Washington to halt the deal saying it would threaten both Israel's national security and stability in the Middle East.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/06 Cryptocurrency funding terrorism?
SOURCE	https://www.financialexpress.com/digital-currency/how-is-cryptocurrency-funding-terrorism-across-the-globe/2656556/
GIST	<p>At a time when the world is going through digital evolution, with currencies too being traded in the form of cryptocurrency, this has led to a rise in concern about insurgents using the same to mobilise terrorism. Case in point, when the Taliban a fundamentalistic Islamic group came into power on August 15, 2021, in Afghanistan, it was perceived that a lot of the money will be routed via cryptocurrency. However, the Taliban regime has banned cryptocurrency and claims to have arrested 16 local exchanges in the city of Herat in the northwest, according to the regional news website ATN-News.</p> <p>Furthermore, as per a report by the Israeli Anti-money laundering (I-AML) website, in the year (August 2020-August 2021), terror organisations received Ethereum (ETH), ERC20 tokens, and XRP donations.</p>  <p><i>Fundraising by most active terror funding-related organisation over time. Courtesy: I-AML; Coinbase</i></p> <p>Da Afghanistan Financial Institution (the central bank) stated in a letter that the trading of digital currency has caused several problems including fraud and hence it needs to be shut down. Sayed Shah Sa'adat, the head of the Herat police's counter-crime squad, told ATN-Information, "We acted and detained all of the exchangers involved in the business and shut down their shops."</p> <p>Meanwhile, the United Nations Counter-Terrorism week in June 2021 stated that the Covid-19 pandemic increased the potential for terrorist organisations to obtain money through online sources. The pandemic made an impact on the implementation of (countering the financing of terrorism) CFT legislation and measures, the South Asia Democratic Forum (SADF) report noted.</p> <p>It is further noted that by the end of 2021, Chainalysis identified a number of terrorist organisations that have attempted to finance through cryptocurrency. "In 2019, 2020, Al-Qaeda raised cryptocurrency through Telegram channels and Facebook groups," the report stated.</p>



Share of total terrorism financing activity by organisation (2017-2021). Courtesy: Chainalysis

In the 2021 global crypto adoption index, blockchain analysis company Chainalysis ranked Afghanistan 20th among 154 countries in the “2021 Global Crypto Adoption Index”. Furthermore, payment transfer companies such as PayPal and Venmo are not supported by banks in Afghanistan. This is restricting the financial services to the crypto traders.

Meanwhile, Google Trends data shows a greater than 100% increase in interest in the search keywords “Bitcoin,” “crypto,” and “cryptocurrency,” particularly in the provinces of Herat, Kandahar, Kabul, Nangarhar, and Balkh.

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HEADLINE	09/05 IS experiment using NFTs
SOURCE	https://ambcrypto.com/islamic-state-now-experimenting-with-nfts-for-financing-propaganda
GIST	<p>The first case of terror-themed Non-fungible token (NFT) has surfaced, according to a Wall Street Journal report, with the same underlining the discovery of an NFT commending islamist militants for last month’s attack on an Afghan mosque.</p> <p>The NFT named ‘IS-NEWS #01’ features the emblem of the Islamic State. It was taken down from popular NFT marketplaces like Opensea and Rarible, but is still available on a platform called IPFS.</p> <p>Cause for concern</p> <p>Former U.S intelligence officials believe that this incident indicates a change in strategy by terror groups. They believe that these groups are attempting to evade sanctions and restrictions on fundraising activities by leveraging emerging technologies like NFTs.</p> <p>According to Researcher Raphael Gluck, this is more likely the terror group’s way of testing the waters rather than a fundraising attempt, given that it wasn’t listed for sale. “It’s very much an experiment...to find ways to make content indestructible,” he added.</p> <p>Former federal intelligence analyst Mario Cosby told WSJ that taking down the NFT would be a challenge due to its “censorship-proof” nature.</p> <p>Terror groups rely heavily on propaganda to garner support and funds for their operations, but increasing sanctions have limited avenues for such activities. Security experts are now concerned about NFTs emerging as a new way for terror groups like the Islamic State to spread the word and collect donations.</p> <p>The incident has drawn attention from regulators, which is not good news for the broader crypto-industry given that it is already under heavy scrutiny following the collapse of Terra.</p> <p>Role of crypto in terror funding</p>

	<p>This may be the first incident involving NFTs, but the use of cryptocurrencies by terror outfits has raised concerns in several countries. Earlier this year, Israeli authorities confiscated 30 crypto-wallets from exchange accounts associated with Palestinian militant group Hamas.</p> <p>Israeli officials claimed that the seized accounts were allegedly being used by Hamas to fund terror campaigns against their country.</p> <p>However, according to a report by Coinbase, transactions associated with terror funding make up for less than 0.05% of all illicit volume in crypto.</p> <p>The Financial Sector Innovation Policy Roundtable held by the U.S Department of the Treasury last year noted the role of cryptocurrencies as a “tool to finance terrorism.” It implored lawmakers and regulators across the panel to collaborate on policies that would limit the use of crypto in terrorism funding, among other things.</p> <p>Earlier this year, the European Union passed a new legislation in a bid to strengthen the European framework to fight illicit transactions. Under the new law, crypto-transactions will be held to the same standards as traditional money transfers when it comes to traceability to prevent terrorist financing, money laundering etc.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/06 Android spyware targets Uighur community
SOURCE	https://thehackernews.com/2022/09/researchers-find-new-android-spyware.html
GIST	<p>A previously undocumented strain of Android spyware with extensive information gathering capabilities has been found disguised as a book likely designed to target the Uyghur community in China.</p> <p>The malware comes under the guise of a book titled "The China Freedom Trap," a biography written by the exiled Uyghur leader Dolkun Isa.</p> <p>"In light of the ongoing conflict between the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Uyghur community, the malware disguised as the book is a lucrative bait employed by threat actors (TAs) to spread malicious infection in the targeted community," cybersecurity firm Cyble said in a report published Monday.</p> <p>The existence of the malware samples, which come with the package name "com.emc.pdf," was first disclosed by researchers from the MalwareHunterTeam late last month.</p> <p>Distributed outside of the official Google Play Store, the app, once installed and opened, displays a few pages of the book, including the cover page, an introduction, and a letter purportedly sent by Michael Kozak and Sam Brownback to Isa on June 15, 2018, condoling his mother's death.</p> <p>In reality, however, the malicious APK file is engineered to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hide the app icon, • steal device and SIM information, • steal SMS messages, contacts and call logs, • identify neighboring cell information (received signal strength, Cell ID location), • make calls and send SMSes on behalf of victims, • delete SMS and call logs, and • take pictures from the infected device's camera and capture its screen. <p>"TAs are leveraging various methods, including regional and biogeographical conflicts, to fulfill their malicious intentions," the researchers said. "In this case, they are seen taking advantage of the Uyghur-Chinese conflict to target unsuspecting individuals."</p>
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HEADLINE	09/06 London biggest bus operator targeted
SOURCE	https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/londons-biggest-bus-operator-hit/
GIST	<p>Travellers in London are braced for more delays after the city's largest bus operator revealed it has been hit by a "cybersecurity incident," according to reports.</p> <p>Newcastle-based transportation group Go-Ahead shared a statement with the London Stock Exchange indicating "unauthorized activity" had been discovered on its network yesterday.</p> <p>"Upon becoming aware of the incident, Go-Ahead immediately engaged external forensic specialists and has taken precautionary measures with its IT infrastructure whilst it continues to investigate the nature and extent of the incident and implement its incident response plans," it stated.</p> <p>"Go-Ahead will continue to assess the potential impact of the incident but confirms that there is no impact on UK or International rail services which are operating normally."</p> <p>However, the same may not be true of its bus services. Sky News reported that bus and driver rosters may have been impacted by the attack, which could disrupt operations.</p> <p>Go-Ahead operates multiple services in the South, South West, London, North West, East Anglia, East Yorkshire and its native North East.</p> <p>It is London's largest bus company, operating over 2400 buses in the capital and employing more than 7000 staff.</p> <p>The firm also operates several high-capacity railway services in the UK including Great Northern, Thameslink, Gatwick Express and Southern.</p> <p>The incident comes just weeks before Go-Ahead is due to be acquired by a consortium of Australia and New Zealand's largest bus network, Kinetic, and Spanish firm Globalvia. The acquisition previously estimated the value of the UK business at £669m.</p> <p>It's too early to say yet whether the "incident" is ransomware, but threat actors have targeted mass public transit systems frequently in the past.</p> <p>Previous victims have included subway operators in Toronto, San Francisco and New York.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/05 Interpol dismantles sextortion ring
SOURCE	https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/interpol-dismantles-sextortion-ring-warns-of-increased-attacks/
GIST	<p>A transnational sextortion ring was uncovered and dismantled following a joint investigation between Interpol's cybercrime division and police in Singapore and Hong Kong.</p> <p>Interpol says that 12 suspects believed to be core members of this criminal organization were arrested in July and August after investigators found that they asked potential victims via online sex and dating platforms to download a malicious mobile app to engage in "naked chats."</p> <p>However, their targets didn't know this app was designed to steal the contents of their phones' contact lists which the cybercriminals would use to blackmail the victims, threatening to share their nude videos with relatives and friends in their address books.</p> <p>"We conducted a proactive investigation and in-depth analysis of a zombie command and control server hosting the malicious application, which – along with the joint efforts by our counterparts – allowed us to identify and locate individuals linked to the criminal syndicate," said Raymond Lam Cheuk Ho, the head of Hong Kong Police's Cyber Security and Technology Crime Bureau.</p>

[Sextortion](#) is a type of digital extortion where the criminals coerce or trick their targets into sharing explicit videos or images that will later be used for blackmail.

To make things even scarier for their targets, they'll also often gain access to their social media or contact info, threatening to send the sexual imagery they got their hands on to the victims' families and friends.

Scammers behind sextortion campaigns are also known to [distribute various strains of malware](#) via phishing emails, ranging from data-stealing trojans to ransomware.

Spike in sextortion attacks

Today's announcement comes after Interpol launched an [awareness campaign](#) in June to warn Internet users of a striking increase in digital extortion threats like sextortion, ransomware, and Distributed Denial-of-Service (DDoS) attacks.

"A sharp rise in sextortion reports has been observed around the world in recent years, mirroring a rise in other types of cybercrime that has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic," Interpol [said](#).

"INTERPOL's awareness campaigns on cyber threats have emphasized that just one click – on an unverified link or to send an intimate photo or video to someone – can suffice to fall victim to cybercrime."

The FBI warned one year ago of a [massive increase in sextortion complaints](#) since the start of 2021, which resulted in total financial losses of more than \$8 million until the end of July 2021.

As the FBI advised potential victims at the time to protect themselves from extortion attempts:

- NEVER send compromising images of yourself to anyone, no matter who they are or who they say they are.
- Do not open attachments from people you do not know. Links can secretly hack your electronic devices using malware to access your private data, photos, and contacts or control your web camera and microphone without your knowledge.
- Turn off your electronic devices and web cameras when not in use.

"Having a criminal access the most intimate aspects of your life and using this information against you to extort enormous sums of cash is anyone's nightmare – and the most frightening part is that anyone could fall victim to this type of crime," added today Stephen Kavanagh, INTERPOL's Executive Director of Police Services.

"Sextortionists sometimes count on their victims feeling too much shame to go to the police, but reporting these crimes is often the first step to bringing these criminals to justice."

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HEADLINE	09/05 EvilProxy: reverse-proxy PaaS platform
SOURCE	https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/new-evilproxy-service-lets-all-hackers-use-advanced-phishing-tactics/
GIST	<p>A reverse-proxy Phishing-as-a-Service (PaaS) platform called EvilProxy has emerged, promising to steal authentication tokens to bypass multi-factor authentication (MFA) on Apple, Google, Facebook, Microsoft, Twitter, GitHub, GoDaddy, and even PyPI.</p> <p>The service enables low-skill threat actors who don't know how to set up reverse proxies to steal online accounts that are otherwise well-protected.</p> <p>Reverse proxies are servers that sit between the targeted victim and a legitimate authentication endpoint, such as a company's login form. When the victim connects to a phishing page, the reverse proxy displays the legitimate login form, forwards requests, and returns responses from the company's website.</p>

When the victim enters their credentials and MFA to the phishing page, they are forwarded to the actual platform's server, where the user is logged in, and a session cookie is returned.

However, as the threat actor's proxy sits in the middle, it can also steal the session cookie containing the authentication token. The threat actors can then use this authentication cookie to log in to the site as the user, bypassing configured multi-factor authentication protections.

Sophisticated APT groups have been employing reverse proxies for a while now to bypass MFA protections on target accounts, some using their own [custom tools](#) while others using more [readily-deployable kits](#) like Modlishka, Necrobrowser, and Evilginx2.

The difference between these phishing frameworks and EvilProxy is that the latter is far simpler to deploy, offers detailed instructional videos and tutorials, a user-friendly graphical interface, and a rich selection of cloned phishing pages for popular internet services.

A deeper look at EvilProxy

Cybersecurity firm [Resecurity reports](#) that EvilProxy offers an easy-to-use GUI where threat actors can set up and manage phishing campaigns and all the details that underpin them.

The service promises to steal usernames, passwords, and session cookies, for a cost of \$150 for ten days, \$250 for 20 days, or \$400 for a month-long campaign. Attacks against Google accounts cost more, at \$250/450/600.

While the service is actively promoted on various clearnet and dark web hacking forums, the operators vet the clients, so some prospective buyers are likely rejected.

According to Resecurity, the payment for the service is arranged individually on Telegram. Once the deposit is made, the customer gets access to the portal hosted in the onion network (TOR).

Resecurity's test of the platform confirmed that EvilProxy also offers VM, anti-analysis, and anti-bot protection to filter out invalid or unwanted visitors on the phishing sites hosted by the platform.

“The bad actors are using multiple techniques and approaches to recognize victims and to protect the phishing-kit code from being detected,” explains Resecurity in the report.

“Like fraud prevention and cyber threat intelligence (CTI) solutions, they aggregate data about known VPN services, Proxies, TOR exit nodes and other hosts which may be used for IP reputation analysis (of potential victims).”

A service to look out for

As MFA adoption continues to increase, more threat actors turn to reverse-proxy tools, and the appearance of a platform that automates everything for the crooks isn't good news for security professionals and network admins.

For now, this problem remains addressable only by implementing client-side TLS fingerprinting to identify and filter out man-in-the-middle requests. However, the status of this implementation in the industry isn't in sync with the developments.

Hence, platforms like EvilProxy essentially bridge the skill gap and offer low-tier threat actors a cost-efficient way to steal valuable accounts.

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SOURCE	https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/tiktok-denies-security-breach-after-hackers-leak-user-data-source-code/
GIST	<p>TikTok denies recent claims it was breached, and source code and user data were stolen, telling BleepingComputer that data posted to a hacking forum is "completely unrelated" to the company.</p> <p>On Friday, a hacking group known as 'AgainstTheWest' created a topic on a hacking forum claiming to have breached both TikTok and WeChat. The user shared screenshots of an alleged database belonging to the companies, which they say was accessed on an Alibaba cloud instance containing data for both TikTok and WeChat users.</p> <p>The threat actor says this server holds 2.05 billion records in a massive 790GB database containing user data, platform statistics, software code, cookies, auth tokens, server info, and many more.</p> <p>While the name AgainstTheWest may sound like the hacking group is targeting Western countries, the threat actors claim to only target countries and companies hostile to Western interests.</p> <p>"Don't let the name confuse you, ATW targets countries they perceive to be a threat to western society, currently they are targeting China and Russia and have plans to target North Korea, Belarus and Iran in the future," explains cybersecurity researcher CyberKnow.</p> <p>TikTok denies being hacked</p> <p>TikTok has told BleepingComputer that the claims of the company being hacked are false. Furthermore, the company said the source code shared on hacking forums isn't part of its platform.</p> <p>"This is an incorrect claim — our security team investigated this statement and determined that the code in question is completely unrelated to TikTok's backend source code, which has never been merged with WeChat data." - TikTok.</p> <p>TikTok also told us that the leaked user data could not result from a direct scraping of its platform, as they have adequate security safeguards to prevent automated scripts from collecting user information.</p> <p>BleepingComputer has also reached out to WeChat for a statement, but we have not yet received a response from them.</p> <p>While WeChat and TikTok are both Chinese firms, they are not owned by the same parent company, with the former belonging to Tencent and the latter to ByteDance. Therefore, seeing them both in a single database indicates that it was not a direct breach on each platform.</p> <p>Most likely, the unprotected database was created by a third-party data scraper or broker who scraped public data from both services and saved it into a single database.</p> <p>The two companies are constantly in the spotlight of privacy investigations by national services, so finding such a rich cloud instance containing both companies' data is raising suspicions.</p> <p>Troy Hunt, the creator of the HaveIBeenPwned data breach notification service, confirmed in a Twitter thread that some of the data were valid. However, Hunt could not find anything that is not publicly available in TikTok, thus proving an internal systems breach.</p> <p>Similarly, "database hunter" Bob Diachenko has validated the leaked user data as real, but couldn't provide any concrete conclusions about the origin of the data.</p> <p>If further analysis reveals that the data is legitimate, TikTok will be forced to take action to mitigate the leak's effects even if it wasn't breached. We have requested an additional comment from the platform on that front, but we haven't received an answer.</p> <p>The story will be updated as soon as new evidence or conclusions become available.</p>

HEADLINE	09/04 KeyBank customer data stolen
SOURCE	https://www.securityweek.com/keybank-hackers-third-party-provider-stole-customer-data?&web_view=true
GIST	<p>Hackers stole personal data including Social Security numbers, addresses and account numbers of home mortgage holders at KeyBank, the bank reports, in the breach of a third-party vendor that serves multiple corporate clients.</p> <p>The hackers obtained the information on July 5 after breaking into computers at the insurance services provider Overby-Seawell Company, according to a letter that Cleveland-based KeyBank sent to affected residential mortgage customers.</p> <p>KeyBank, which operates in 15 states and has close to \$200 billion in assets, would not say how many of its customers were affected or answer any other questions about the breach. In a statement, it said it was notified of the data theft on Aug. 4 and KeyBank systems and operations were unaffected.</p> <p>Overby-Seawell did not respond to phone messages and emails sent to executives seeking comment. In the statement sent Friday to The Associated Press, KeyBank said Kennesaw, Georgia-based Overby-Seawell “suffered a cybersecurity incident that compromised data of its corporate clients.” It did not elaborate.</p> <p>According to its website, Overby-Seawell’s customers include banks, credit unions, mortgage servicers, finance companies and property investors. Its products include a tracking system for real-time insurance monitoring that can be integrated with other financial industry software platforms.</p> <p>In an Aug. 26 letter shared with the AP by an affected mortgage-holder, KeyBank said the information acquired in the Overby-Seawell breach related to their mortgage includes their name, address, mortgage account number and the first eight digits of their nine-digit Social Security number.</p> <p>That’s plenty of information for identity thieves to commit serious fraud.</p> <p>“We take this matter very seriously and have notified all affected individuals,” KeyBank said in the letter.</p> <p>KeyBank said Overby-Seawell had notified law enforcement and was investigating the breach with the help of third-party cybersecurity experts. It encouraged the mortgage holder to sign up for free fraud monitoring.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/05 Iran: facial recognition to enforce hijab law
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2022/sep/05/iran-government-facial-recognition-technology-hijab-law-crackdown
GIST	<p>The Iranian government is planning to use facial recognition technology on public transport to identify women who are not complying with a strict new law on wearing the hijab, as the regime continues its increasingly punitive crackdown on women’s dress.</p> <p>The secretary of Iran’s Headquarters for Promoting Virtue and Preventing Vice, Mohammad Saleh Hashemi Golpayegani, announced in a recent interview that the government was planning to use surveillance technology against women in public places following a new decree signed by the country’s hardline president, Ebrahim Raisi, on restricting women’s clothing.</p> <p>The decree was signed on 15 August, a month after the 12 July national “Hijab and Chastity Day”, which sparked countrywide protests by women who posted videos of themselves on social media with their heads uncovered on streets and on buses and trains. In recent weeks, the Iranian authorities have responded with a spate of arrests, detentions and forced confessions on television.</p>

“The Iranian government has long played with the idea of using facial recognition to identify people who violate the law,” said Azadeh Akbari, a researcher at the University of Twente, in the Netherlands. “The regime combines violent ‘old-fashioned’ forms of totalitarian control dressed up in new technologies.”

The hijab, a head-covering worn by Muslim women, became mandatory after Iran’s revolution in 1979. Yet, over the decades since, women have pushed the limits of the stipulated dress code.

Some of the women arrested for defying the new decree were identified after videos were posted online of them being harassed on public transport for not wearing the hijab properly. One, 28-year-old Sepideh Rashno, was arrested after a video circulated on social media of her being berated for “improper dress” by a fellow passenger, who was then forced off the vehicle by bystanders intervening on Rashno’s behalf. According to the human rights group Hrana, Rashno was beaten after her arrest and subsequently forced to apologise on television to the passenger who harassed her.

Rashno is not the first person to suffer violent repression as a result of going viral on the internet. In 2014, six Iranians – three men and three women – were sentenced to one year in prison and 91 lashes after a video of them dancing in Tehran to Pharrell Williams’s song Happy had more than 150,000 views.

Since 2015, the Iranian government has been phasing in biometric identity cards, which include a chip that stores data such as iris scans, fingerprints and facial images. Researchers worry that this information will now be used with facial recognition technology to identify people who violate the mandated dress code, both in the streets and cyberspace.

“A large chunk of the Iranian population is now in this national biometric data bank, as many public services are becoming dependent on biometric IDs,” said Akbari. “So the government has access to all the faces; they know where people come from and they can easily find them. A person in a viral video can be identified in seconds.”

She added: “By doing that, the government proves a point: ‘Don’t think that a small thing happening on a bus somewhere is going to be forgotten. We know who you are and we will find you and then you will have to suffer the consequences.’”

“Ebrahim Raisi is a real ideologue,” said Annabelle Sreberny, professor emeritus at the Centre for Iranian Studies at Soas University of London. “There are terrible economic and environmental problems facing Iran. The inflation rate may now be reaching 50%, but the government is choosing to focus on women’s rights.”

Sreberny added: “I think it is part and parcel of a failing government that is simply not dealing with these massive infrastructural, economic and environmental issues. And women are seen to be a soft target.”

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HEADLINE	09/03 Phishing scam targets AMEX customers
SOURCE	https://www.hackread.com/american-express-notification-phishing-scam/
GIST	<p>Armorblox security researchers have uncovered a new phishing campaign in which attackers are targeting American Express customers.</p> <p>As per researchers, in this phishing scam, scammers lure American Express cardholders into opening an attachment and try to steal confidential data to access their accounts.</p> <p>In this financially motivated campaign, attackers first send a spoofed email of the much-recognized card brand and ask the customers to click on the link included in the email attachment.</p> <p>Using social engineering and brand impersonation, the attackers lure their targets onto fake and malicious landing pages.</p>

When the victim clicks on this link, they are redirected to a fake American Express landing page. This page is also crafted smartly to resemble the original American Express login page, including the company's genuine logo, navigational links, and a link to download the American Express app.

In reality, scammers are using a customised domain for this attack. Once there, victims are prompted to sign in to verify their accounts. They enter their user ID and password.

The Legit-looking Phishing Email

In this [phishing scam](#), the email is designed to appear as an authentic American Express notification. The email subject, according to Armorblox's [blog post](#), reads: "Important Notification About Your Account."

It informs the recipient to verify their account. Otherwise, the company will suspend it. The phrase "This is your last chance to confirm it before we suspend it" is included to create a sense of urgency. Victims are requested to complete a one-time verification process to update their credentials and prevent suspension of their accounts.

The email content is created wisely so that a sense of trust is evoked in the recipient. For instance, it includes the American Express logo on the top left, and a signature is featured at the end to deceive the users into believing that the company's customer service team sent the email.

Prime Targets

Armorblox co-founder and CEO DJ Sampath stated that financial firms are more frequently targeted with credential phishing scams. The main targets of this scam are holders of American Express charge cards.

What's note worthy is that the phishing scam has bypassed [Google Workspace Security](#) successfully, and so far, the email has been sent to around 16,000 email addresses of American Express employees.

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HEADLINE	09/03 IRS data leak exposes personal info
SOURCE	https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/irs-data-leak-exposes-personal-info-of-120-000-taxpayers/
GIST	<p>The Internal Revenue Service has accidentally leaked confidential information for approximately 120,000 taxpayers who filed a form 990-T as part of their tax returns.</p> <p>IRS Form 990T is used to report 'unrelated business income' paid to a tax-exempt entity, such as nonprofits (charities) or IRA and SEP retirement accounts.</p> <p>This income is commonly derived from sales unrelated to a nonprofit's core purpose or real estate investments that pay income into an individual retirement account.</p> <p>For regular taxpayers, these forms are meant to be confidential and seen only by the IRS. However, for nonprofits, a Form 990-T must be available for public inspection for three years.</p> <p>On Friday, the IRS disclosed that in addition to sharing Form 990-T data for charities, they also accidentally included data for taxpayers' IRAs that was not meant to be public.</p> <p>"The IRS recently discovered that some machine-readable (XML) Form 990-T data made available for bulk download section on the Tax Exempt Organization Search (TEOS) should not have been made public," the IRS disclosed on Friday.</p> <p>"This section is primarily used by those with the ability to use machine-readable data; other more widely used sections of TEOS are unaffected."</p> <p>The Wall Street Journal reports that the data leak exposed info for approximately 120,000 taxpayers and included names, contact information, and reported income for those IRAs. However, the IRS states that the data did not include social security numbers, individual tax returns, or detailed account-holder information.</p>

	<p>According to the Wall Street Journal, an IRS research employee discovered the data leak, which triggered a report to Congress on Friday.</p> <p>The IRS states that the data has been removed and that they will send notifications to affected taxpayers in the coming weeks.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/02 San Francisco 49ers confirm data breach
SOURCE	https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/san-francisco-49ers-blackbyte-ransomware-gang-stole-info-of-20k-people/
GIST	<p>NFL's San Francisco 49ers are mailing notification letters confirming a data breach affecting more than 20,000 individuals following a ransomware attack that hit its network earlier this year.</p> <p>The San Francisco Bay Area professional American football team confirmed that personal information (including names and Social Security numbers) belonging to <u>20,930</u> impacted individuals was accessed and/or stolen in the attack between February 6 and February 11, 2022.</p> <p>"The 49ers conducted a thorough review of these files to identify the individuals whose information was contained in the files, and additional research to locate and verify the addresses for these individuals," the team revealed in notification letters sent to affected individuals starting Thursday.</p> <p>"The 49ers completed this process on August 9, 2022, and discovered that the incident involved the name and Social Security number of seven Maine residents."</p> <p>At the time, the 49ers confirmed the incident in a statement to BleepingComputer, saying it caused a temporary disruption to portions of their IT network.</p> <p>While the football team did not reveal whether the attackers successfully deployed ransomware payloads, the statement said they are still restoring systems, indicating that the breached devices were also likely encrypted.</p> <p>"As the investigation continues, we are working diligently to restore involved systems as quickly and as safely as possible," the 49ers told BleepingComputer.</p> <p>Attack claimed by the Blackbyte ransomware gang</p> <p>The BlackByte gang claimed responsibility for the attack on February 12, right as the NFL was getting ready for Super Bowl 2022, by starting to leak files allegedly stolen from the 49ers' network.</p> <p>The ransomware group published an archive containing 292 MB worth of files the gang said were invoices stolen from 49ers' compromised servers.</p> <p>Although it is unknown how much data was stolen during the February attack, BlackByte is known for selling gigabytes of data from some of its previous victims.</p> <p>The BlackByte ransomware operation was launched in July 2021 when it started targeting corporate entities worldwide.</p> <p>"We notified law enforcement and are fully supporting their investigation," the 49ers added in the data breach notification letters.</p> <p>"We are also taking steps to help prevent something like this from occurring again, including additional measures to further enhance our security protocols and continued education and training to our employees."</p>
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HEADLINE	09/03 Samsung admits breach exposed US data
SOURCE	https://thehackernews.com/2022/09/samsung-admits-data-breach-that-exposed.html?&web_view=true
GIST	<p>South Korean chaebol Samsung on Friday said it experienced a cybersecurity incident that resulted in the unauthorized access of some customer information, the second time this year it has reported such a breach.</p> <p>"In late July 2022, an unauthorized third-party acquired information from some of Samsung's U.S. systems," the company disclosed in a notice. "On or around August 4, 2022, we determined through our ongoing investigation that personal information of certain customers was affected."</p> <p>Samsung said the infiltration enabled hackers to access certain data such as names, contact and demographic information, dates of birth, and product registration details.</p> <p>It stressed that the incident did not affect users' Social Security numbers or credit and debit card numbers, but noted the information leaked for each relevant customer may vary.</p> <p>The collected information is necessary to help the company deliver the best experience with its products and services, it added. It's unclear how many customers were affected or who was behind the hack, and why it took almost a month for the company to divulge the breach.</p> <p>Aside from notifying users about the security event, Samsung stated it has taken steps to secure the impacted systems and engaged an outside cybersecurity firm to lead the response efforts.</p> <p>Furthermore, it's urging users to be on guard against potential social engineering attempts, avoid clicking on links or opening attachments from unknown senders, and review their accounts for potentially suspicious activity.</p> <p>The announcement comes less than six months after Samsung confirmed a similar incident. In March 2022, it revealed that internal data, including the source code related to its Galaxy smartphones, was leaked in the aftermath of an attack staged by the LAPSUS\$ extortion gang.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/03 BlackCat claims Italy energy agency attack
SOURCE	https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/blackcat-ransomware-claims-attack-on-italian-energy-agency/?&web_view=true
GIST	<p>The BlackCat/ALPHV ransomware gang claimed responsibility for an attack that hit the systems of Italy's energy agency Gestore dei Servizi Energetici SpA (GSE) over the weekend.</p> <p>GSE is a publicly-owned company that promotes and supports renewable energy sources (RES) across Italy.</p> <p>A GSE spokesperson disclosed that its website and systems were taken down to block the attackers from gaining access to the data after detecting the attack on Sunday night—GSE's website is still down, almost a week after the incident.</p> <p>Cybersecurity authorities and police in Italy are still investigating the attack and looking into what data was compromised during the incident, GSE told Bloomberg.</p> <p>Before GSE's disclosure, the BlackCat ransomware group added a new entry to its dark web data leak site claiming to have stolen roughly 700GB of files from the Italian energy agency's servers.</p> <p>The attackers say that the stolen files contain confidential data, including contracts, reports, project information, accounting documents, and other internal documentation.</p>

This attack follows another incident involving Eni SpA, the largest energy company in Italy, with more than 31,000 employees that operates in national and international markets.

Eni SpA also [revealed](#) that it was recently hacked as part of a cyberattack the firm said had minor consequences on its operations.

Earlier this year, BlackCat also said it was behind ransomware attacks against [Creos Luxembourg S.A.](#), a natural gas pipeline and electricity network operator from central Europe, and the German petrol supply firm [Oiltanking](#).

A Darkside/Blackmatter rebrand

The BlackCat/ALPHV ransomware operation was launched [in November 2021](#) and is believed to be [a rebrand of the DarkSide/BlackMatter gang](#).

The ransomware gang first gained notoriety as DarkSide after [attacking the Colonial Pipeline](#) and landing in the crosshairs of [international law enforcement](#).

Although they [rebranded as BlackMatter](#) in July 2021, they were quickly [forced to shut down](#) again in November, after the gang's servers were seized and [Emsisoft found and exploited a weakness](#) in the ransomware to create a decryptor.

This group is considered one of the most significant ransomware threats currently targeting enterprises worldwide.

So far, it has been linked to attacks against companies such as the [Swissport](#) airline cargo handling services provider and the [Moncler](#) fashion group.

More recently, BlackCat has also been evolving its extortion tactics, launching a [new searchable database of stolen data](#) that made the group's double-extortion attacks even more damaging for victims.

In April, the FBI [warned](#) that BlackCat has "extensive networks and experience with ransomware operations" as they had breached more than [60 entities worldwide](#) between November 2021 and March 2022.

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Terrorism, Extremism

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HEADLINE	09/04 US establishes 3rd military base Syria
SOURCE	https://english.aawsat.com/home/article/3854216/us-forces-establish-third-military-base-syrias-qamishli
GIST	<p>US forces established a third military base in Syria's northeastern province of Hasakah on Saturday, a war monitor reported.</p> <p>According to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR), the new military base was set up in Naqara village, three kilometers southwest of Qamishli city in Hasakah province.</p> <p>The two other bases are in Himo village, which is located nearly four kilometers northwest of Qamishli, and Tel Fares area, which is located nearly three kilometers to the southwest of Qamishli, adjacent to the end of the runway of Qamishli Airport.</p> <p>Separately, reliable SOHR sources in Deir Ezzor's countryside reported that Iran-backed militias have been redeployed in the area, fearing possible attacks by international coalition reconnaissance drones on their positions.</p>

	They confirmed that explosions that rocked al-Omar oil field base in Deir Ezzor’s countryside were caused by military drills by coalition forces in the base.
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HEADLINE	09/05 Geography lessons 9/11 terrorist network
SOURCE	https://www.lawfareblog.com/geography-lessons-911-terrorist-network
GIST	<p><i>Mapping the travel geography of terrorist networks can help expose how they operate internationally. Olivier Walther, Joseph Padron, and Jason Scheuer of the University of Florida and Rafael Prieto Curiel of the Complexity Science Hub in Vienna take a close look at the 9/11 plot and find that terrorists who belonged to the same operational cell did not necessarily live in the same place at the same time. However, their itineraries closely matched their organizational structure. Distinct travel patterns and strong social ties not only made the 9/11 travel network resilient but also essentially allowed the 19 hijackers to hide in plain sight while being very mobile.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">***</p> <p>On June 3, 2000, Mohamed Atta, the ringleader of the Sept. 11 attacks, cleared Immigration and Customs at Newark Liberty International Airport after arriving from Prague, Czech Republic. Over the course of the next year and a half, Atta and 18 other terrorists embarked on a series of trips within the United States, from the suburbs of Phoenix to the ethnic neighborhoods of Paterson, New Jersey, and from the ritzy beaches of Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, to Portland, Maine.</p> <p>The 9/11 hijackers also traveled extensively internationally, visiting more than a dozen countries and crossing international borders at least 45 times. From the moment they entered the United States until the morning that they killed 2,977 people, Atta and his accomplices each traveled, on average, more than half of the circumference of Earth.</p> <p>This flurry of travel can help inform an understanding of terrorist networks. Our analysis of the travel patterns of the 9/11 hijackers suggests that mapping the travel geography of members of violent extremist organizations can yield important insights into the group’s overall structure.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Which Terrorists Flock Together?</p> <p>To find out whether geography really matters, we collected detailed information about the known location of each hijacker using publicly available sources from the 9/11 Commission, the FBI, and the U.S. Congress. In total, we documented 231 trips between 48 metropolitan areas across the world, totaling more than 445,000 miles.</p> <p>Our study shows that terrorists who worked closely together as part of the same operational cell during preparation for the 9/11 attacks tended to cluster in a few regions of the United States, including the Boston-Washington, D.C., corridor, southern Florida, and the triangle between Los Angeles, Las Vegas, and Phoenix (Figure 1). The entire set of hijackers of the two planes that crashed into the World Trade Center, for example, lived in or visited Fort Lauderdale at some point in time. There, they seemed to have lived relatively “normal” lives—opening bank accounts, visiting Lion Country Safari, and shopping at local supermarkets.</p>

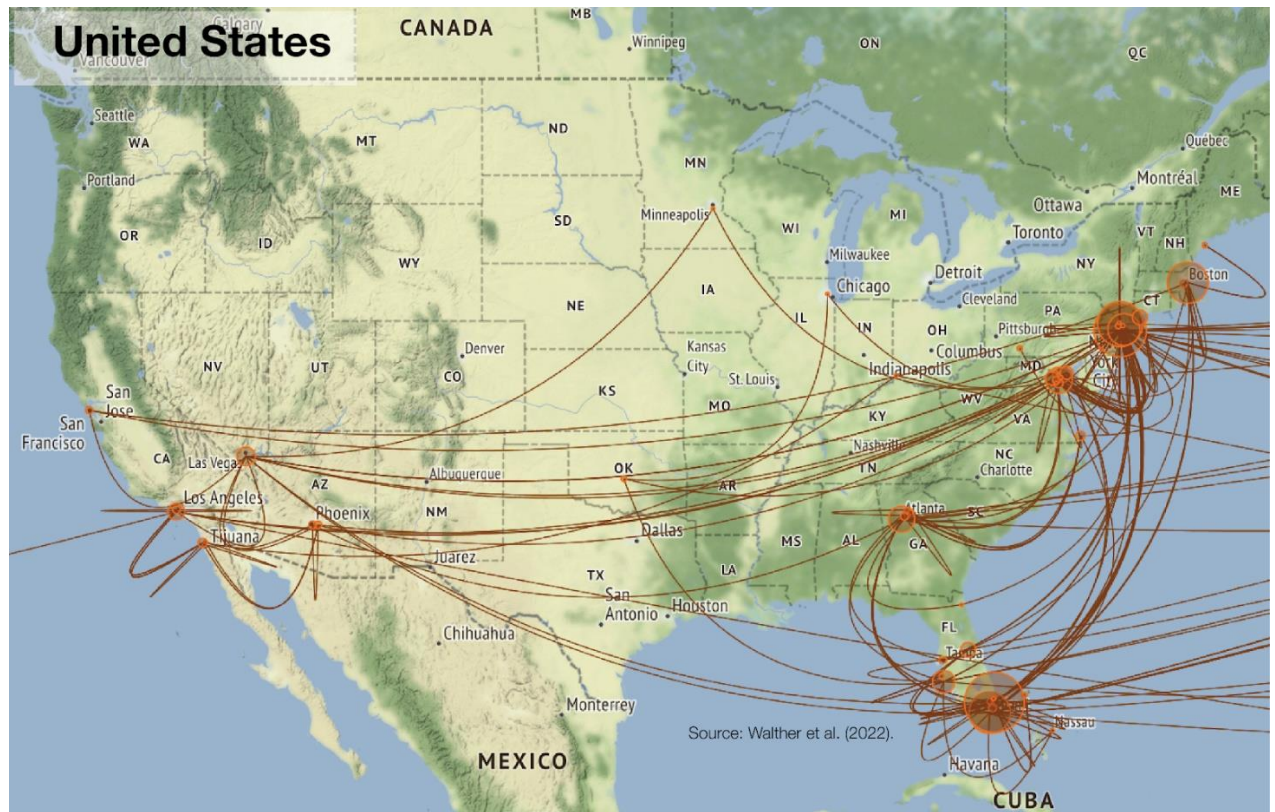


Figure 1. Domestic travel patterns of the 9/11 hijackers. The size of the cities is proportional to the number of trips between them. Source: Authors.

However, the 9/11 hijackers did not necessarily live in or visit the same places at the same time. Our analysis reveals that co-presence may provide crucial information about some aspects of the network but does not really identify the cell-based operational structure that enabled the coordinated, simultaneous attacks aboard different planes.

To demonstrate this, we calculated the number of days shared by each pair of hijackers in the same location. Individuals who spent many days together in the same city are represented with large squares in Figure 2. Our analysis shows that the largest number of shared days is not always found within each cell, colored according to their flight.

For example, several members of the cell that boarded American Airlines Flight 11, which crashed into the North Tower of the World Trade Center, spent as much or more time with some of those who hijacked United Airlines Flight 175, which crashed into the South Tower, and United Airlines Flight 93, which crashed in Pennsylvania.

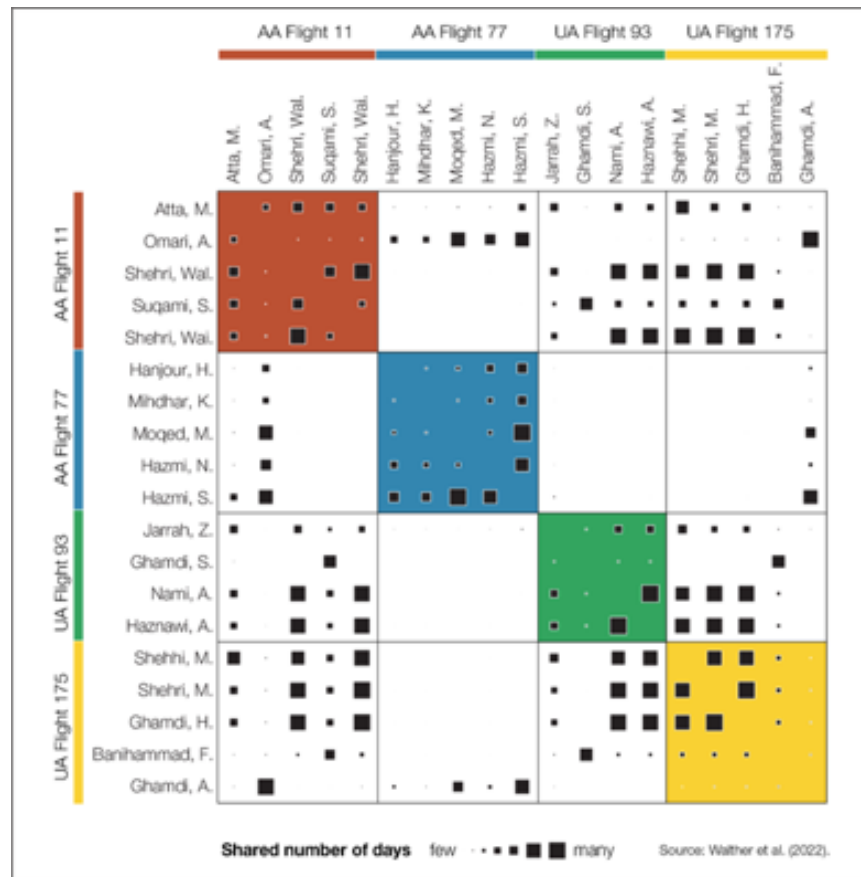


Figure 2. Number of days shared by each pair of al-Qaeda operatives in the same location. The size of squares indicates length of time spent together in the same city by each pair of hijackers. Colored boxes indicate co-membership within cells. Source: Authors.

Space Can Inform Social Structure

The hijackers' pre-9/11 travel patterns reveal that the itineraries and destinations of the al-Qaeda operatives more closely matched their organizational structure than did co-presence. To demonstrate this, we represented each hijacker as a node in a network connecting different places in the United States and abroad. Hijackers who moved numerous times between the same cities are connected.

We then compared this spatial network with a reconstruction of the hijackers' [social network](#) based on who they trained with, lived with, or had other known contact with before the attacks. As shown in Figure 3, the similarity between the two networks is striking: The spatial structure of the network based on similar trajectories mimics how hijackers were socially connected. In other words, the destinations of their travel are a rather good match for what we now know about the cell structure of the network.

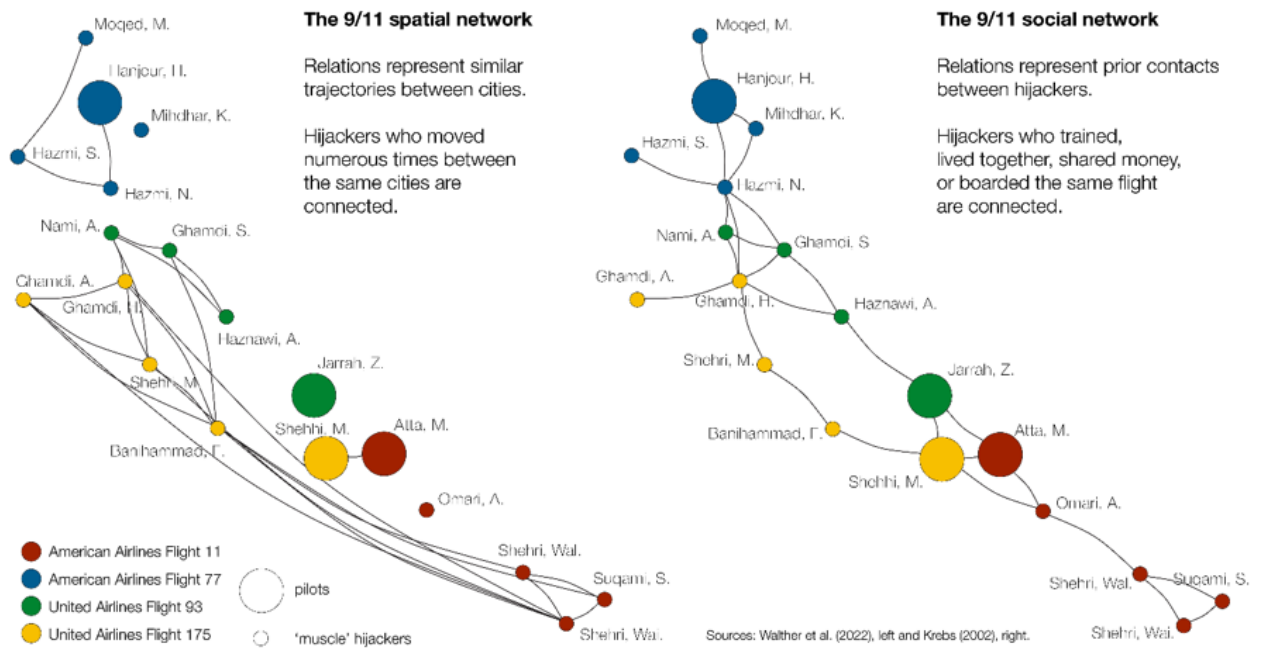


Figure 3. Comparing the 9/11 spatial and social networks. The spatial network (left) connects individuals depending on the similarity of their trajectories between cities. Similar trajectories are weighted more in the network. The social network (right) connects individuals based on their prior contacts. Pilots are represented with large nodes, “muscle” hijackers with small nodes. Source: Authors.

The co-destination of cell members, or their traveling to the same places at different times, was both inevitable given the task and more revealing after the fact. This spatial aspect of the hijacker network was a function of the way in which they were socially organized as four discrete cells with identical tasks to be carried out simultaneously at separate locations. Because of this parallel structure, for example, pilots had to travel to certain flight schools to finish up their training, while “muscle” hijackers, who arrived in the United States less than five months prior to the attacks, needed to be moved to rented apartments to settle rapidly in the country.

This spatial organization also allowed the 19 hijackers to hide in plain sight while simultaneously being very mobile. Some of the early travel patterns of the network were successfully detected by intelligence agencies, such as those of Khalid al-Mihdhar and Nawaf al-Hazmi in Southeast Asia in 2000. However, the intensity and complexity of the domestic patterns followed by the four al-Qaeda cells became apparent only after the attacks, when intelligence about their prior contacts and locations was finally pieced together.

Spatializing Social Networks

Mapping how terrorists travel from place to place provides a much more comprehensive picture of their social organization than simply monitoring their location. The scale and sophistication of the 9/11 attacks did not require the routine co-presence of cell members, but within-cell travel patterns were detectably similar. In other words, hijackers tended to follow the same itineraries across the United States and the world, without necessarily always visiting the same destinations at the same time.

Thanks to recent developments in network and spatial science, the structure, geography, and temporal evolution of terrorist networks can now be modeled with a level of complexity that would have been unimaginable 21 years ago. Geolocalized data, for example, can be extracted from social media to monitor

the spatial diffusion of violent events and identify the social structure of the most active accounts, as during the 2012 [attack](#) on the U.S. diplomatic compound in Benghazi, Libya.

In years to come, the growing availability of geospatial data and the use of artificial intelligence should make it increasingly easier to detect patterns in terrorist activities. “Knowledge discovery” techniques, for example, are already being developed for the [intelligence](#) and [law enforcement community](#) to predict the outcome of a specific event, identify hotspots where violence could be concentrated, understand connections between the actors involved, and more generally “make sense” of large-scale data in real time.

One thing hasn’t changed, though. While new technologies have facilitated the exchange of easily codified information, such as dates and names, space continues to exert a considerable constraint on connectivity. Then as now, the preparation of terrorist attacks still requires close linkages that can happen only in certain places at a certain time, if only briefly. Similarities in travel patterns, such as those observed in the 9/11 network, should remain difficult, if not impossible, for international terrorist organizations to hide.

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HEADLINE	09/06 Burkina Faso convoy blast kills dozens
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/sep/06/dozens-civilians-killed-burkina-faso-convoy-blast
GIST	<p>At least 35 civilians have been killed and 37 wounded when a convoy carrying supplies in Burkina Faso’s jihadist-hit north struck an improvised explosive device, the governor of the Sahel region has said.</p> <p>The landlocked African state is in the grip of a seven-year insurgency that has claimed more than 2,000 lives and forced 1.9 million people to leave their homes.</p> <p>Monday’s incident took place as the military-led convoy was supplying towns in the restive north on a road between Bourzanga to Djibo, according to a statement by Sahel region governor Rodolphe Sogo.</p> <p>“One of the vehicles carrying civilians hit an improvised explosive device. The provisional toll is 35 dead and 37 injured, all civilians,” it said.</p> <p>“The escorts quickly secured the perimeter and took measures to help the victims,” the statement said, adding that the convoy had left the north for Burkina Faso’s capital, Ouagadougou.</p> <p>A security source told AFP the supply convoy was “composed of civilians, drivers and traders”.</p> <p>According to a resident of Djibo, “several dozen vehicles, including trucks and public transport buses” were hit.</p> <p>“The victims are mainly traders who were going to buy supplies in Ouagadougou and students who were returning to the capital for the next school year,” the resident, who wished to remain anonymous, told AFP.</p> <p>Jihadist groups have recently staged similar attacks on arterial roads leading to the main cities in the north – Dori and Djibo.</p> <p>At the start of August, 15 soldiers died in the same area in a double IED blast.</p> <p>Much of the fighting has been concentrated in the north and east, led by jihadists suspected to have links to al-Qaida or the Islamic State group.</p> <p>With more than 40% of the country outside government control, Burkina’s ruling junta, which seized power in January, has declared the fight against the insurgency a priority.</p>

	<p>On Sunday evening, in a speech to the nation from the town of Dori, junta chief Lieutenant-Colonel Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba welcomed a “relative calm” in several localities.</p> <p>The government said it had intensified the army’s “offensive actions” and also initiated a dialogue with certain armed groups, through religious and local leaders.</p> <p>According to Damiba, this process has enabled “several dozen young people” to lay down their arms.</p> <p>However, there have been numerous attacks since the beginning of the year, such as June’s massacre in the north-western department of Seytenga, when 86 civilians were killed – one of the bloodiest of the long-running insurgency.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/05 Pakistan forces raid militant hideout
SOURCE	https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/pakistani-soldiers-militants-killed-shootout-89370471
GIST	<p>PESHAWAR, Pakistan -- Pakistani security forces raided a militant hideout in a former Taliban stronghold near the border with Afghanistan Monday, triggering a shootout that killed five soldiers and four insurgents.</p> <p>Acting on intelligence, security forces launched the raid in North Waziristan, a district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, according to a military statement.</p> <p>North Waziristan and other former tribal regions in northwestern Pakistan were a base for the Pakistani Taliban and other militant groups until the army claimed that it cleared the region of insurgents. Occasional attacks have continued, however, raising concerns the Pakistani Taliban are regrouping in the area.</p> <p>The Pakistani Taliban are a separate group but allies of the Afghan Taliban, who seized power in Afghanistan a year ago as the U.S. and NATO troops were in the final stages of their pullout.</p> <p>The Taliban takeover in Afghanistan has emboldened the Pakistani Taliban, who are currently in peace talks with the government.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/05 New challenges to surface transportation
SOURCE	https://www.hstoday.us/featured/changing-patterns-of-violence-in-the-u-s-pose-new-challenges-to-surface-transportation/
GIST	<p>A new report from the Mineta Transportation Institute (MTI) at San Jose State University says the rate of attacks on surface transportation in developed countries is going up, and the rate in developing countries is going down. While the number of planned, organized terrorist attacks in the developed countries is decreasing, random violence by criminals and individuals with no apparent political objective is increasing.</p> <p>And as President Biden warns about violence becoming normalized in the United States, the report reveals that the U.S. is now leading in terms of overall attacks and fatal attacks in the developed countries. Since 2016, the United States has taken the lead among the economically advanced countries in both the total number of incidents and number of incidents with fatalities, and it now ranks third in the number of fatalities with 22 deaths recorded.</p> <p>The volume of attacks is also increasing in Europe but at a lesser rate than in North America. Since 2004, 80% of all the attacks in the developed countries have occurred in just eight nations: the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Spain, France, Canada, Chile, and Italy. 29.7% of all the attacks in developed countries occurred in the United States.</p>

The greatest number of attacks involved automatic or semi-automatic weapons, stabbings, or the use of physical force or something like a blunt object. Most were carried out by lone actors. Of 88 attacks studied by the report authors, only two were classified as jihadist, and three were classified as right-wing. These five attacks together accounted for just one fatality. The rest of the attacks were by unknown individuals or groups, mentally disturbed individuals, or criminals, and of the 41 criminal attackers, only nine had a specific criminal objective (hijacking or robbery). The report shows that there have been an increasing number of attacks targeting operating and security personnel.

Even since the publication of the MTI report, the United States has seen violent attacks on public transportation systems. In Washington, D.C., Metro Transit Police Department arrested the sole suspect in a stabbing on the Red Line platform at Metro Center Station on August 23. He is accused of injuring two individuals after a verbal altercation on the station platform. And in New York, a Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) worker was assaulted at the Pelham Bay Park 6 station on August 11, 2022, after coming to the assistance of passengers who were being harassed. MTA is seeking a travel ban for the man facing assault charges.

In March, more than 20 national labor unions wrote to the Department of Transportation and the Federal Transit Authority, demanding federal action to protect transit workers on the job and implement baseline safety standards were signed into law with the Bipartisan Infrastructure bill. The letter cited recent examples, including attacks on Chicago bus and train workers, a knife attack on a Detroit bus driver, a mace attack on a Portland bus driver as he was driving the vehicle, and a violent attack on a bus driver in New York where a passenger hit her to the ground using a fallen tree branch.

In June, New York Governor Kathy Hochul signed legislation to expand current law that charges individuals who attack or harass transit workers with second degree assault. It extends criminal charges to individuals who assault station customer assistants, ticket or revenue collectors, maintenance workers, repairers, cleaners, and their supervisors, who are not protected by existing law.

The MTI report authors say the increase in violence at transportation venues appears to parallel a general increase in random public violence. There are incidents at airports and unruly, sometimes violent passengers are a growing problem in civil aviation. As the report authors state, the attacks have little to do with the mode of transportation or transportation in general. They are merely crowded venues where strangers come together. Some observers blame the behavior on the pandemic, but the authors point out that the trends precede COVID-19 and say there is a need to rethink current security strategies, providing protection and training to transportation employees and enhancing rapid intervention.

The report's observations emerge from a new configuration of the MTI database of Terrorist and Serious Criminal Attacks Against Public Surface Transportation which contains incidents occurring between January 1, 1970, and July 15, 2022. It documents 5,611 attacks worldwide between 1970 and 2021 targeting passenger trains and train stations; buses and bus stations; passenger ferries and terminals; rail and highway infrastructure, facilities, and offices; and operating personnel and security staff. These attacks resulted in a total of 12,837 deaths and 41,950 injuries.

The authors call for a more concentrated examination, including data analysis, of random, "anti-social" violence in public surface transportation. Additional data will, they say, enable the development of new strategies to deal with this surge.

There are likely myriad reasons for rising violence in the United States, and those susceptible to violent tendencies are easily encouraged.

On September 1, President Biden said that the United States is a nation that "rejects violence as a political tool". "We do not encourage violence," he said. "A willingness to engage in political violence is fatal to democracy. We hear more and more talk about violence as an acceptable political tool in this country. It's not. It can never be an acceptable tool."

	<p>Biden said the American people cannot allow violence to be normalized. “We saw law enforcement brutally attacked on January the 6th. We’ve seen election officials, poll workers — many of them volunteers of both parties — subjected to intimidation and death threats. And — can you believe it? — FBI agents just doing their job as directed, facing threats to their own lives from their own fellow citizens. On top of that, there are public figures — today, yesterday, and the day before — predicting and all but calling for mass violence and rioting in the streets.”</p> <p>As he called once again for the country to come together, we are reminded of a key Islamic State and Al-Qaeda goal: to divide society.</p>
Return to Top	Read the full report at San Jose State University

HEADLINE	09/03 Significant role: humor in jihadi rhetoric
SOURCE	https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/counterterrorism/humor-in-jihadi-rhetoric-a-comparative-analysis-of-isis-al-qaeda-ttp-and-the-taliban/
GIST	<p>Humour in Jihadi magazines plays a significant role in the formation of collective identity and “creates a sense of internal cohesion” based on shared experiences. A study of 82 English magazines published by the Taliban, ISIS, Al-Qaeda and Tahrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP) finds significant differences amongst these groups in the type of humour they utilise. Unlike the common perception, militancy is not just about operations, objectives, and strategic thinking. It is also about rituals, costumes and dress codes, music, film and storytelling; “It is about sports, jokes, and food.” However, this “soft dimension of military life” has not received due attention from scholars. Looking inside any radical group, we can observe a range of daily social practices that have no obvious strategic purpose.</p> <p>Jihadis use poetry, they speak about dreams, weep openly and value personal humility, artistic sensitivity, and displays of emotion; jihadi militants do not spend all their time on their bomb-making skills. The downtimes and the soft dimensions of militants’ lives are depicted in the media produced by the groups, which in fact have a strategic purpose. When a jihadi militant about to go on a ‘jihadi mission’—a suicide mission—is shown laughing and playing football with village children in a Taliban video, or militants are described to be laughing, smiling and joking in Al-Qaeda magazines, the question remains: what is the strategic purpose of depicting laughter, humour, jokes, and smiling militants in jihadi rhetoric? After all, jihad is a serious business, and the pages of magazines and minutes of videos are finite. Why spend time showing smiling militants or writing about their jokes?</p>
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HEADLINE	09/02 Photo depicts top AQ leaders inside Iran?
SOURCE	https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2022/09/rare-photo-surfaces-of-top-al-qaeda-leaders-inside-iran.php
GIST	<p>A recently surfaced photograph of three of Al Qaeda’s top leaders, including Saif al Adel – the man many believe to be the successor to emir Ayman al Zawahiri – shows that they were present in the Iranian capital of Tehran.</p> <p>Numerous U.S. government designations have previously outlined the presence of senior Al Qaeda leaders in Iran, but this photo offered rare visual proof.</p> <p>The photo was originally published by @Sw0rdOfAnon (Anonymous) on Twitter. Two U.S. intelligence officials independently confirmed to <i>FDD’s Long War Journal</i> the authenticity of the photograph, as well as the identities of the three men. The intelligence officials said the photograph was taken in Tehran before 2015.</p> <p>The photograph shows, from left to right, Saif al Adel, Abu Muhammad al Masri, and Abu Abu al Khayr al Masri. The photograph casts significant doubt on the assertions that Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corp and Ministry of Intelligence kept these and other Al Qaeda leaders under strict house arrest.</p>

Al Adel, originally a member of Egyptian Islamic Jihad, a jihadist group that formally merged with Al Qaeda prior to 9/11, has long been a top leader in Al Qaeda. Al Adel is known to have [sheltered in Iran](#) along with other key terrorist leaders. Al Adel has served as Al Qaeda's overall military commander and a member of its central decision making council. He is now believed to be inside Afghanistan.

Al Adel's ties to Iran and its chief terrorist proxy, Hezbollah, date to the early 1990s. During the U.S. embassy bombings trial in early 2001, an Al Qaeda defector named Jamal al-Fadl [identified al Adel](#) as one of the Al Qaeda members who received Iran's and Hezbollah's explosives training. The 9/11 Commission later found that Al Qaeda used this training to develop the "[tactical expertise](#)" necessary to conduct the 1998 Kenya and Tanzania embassy bombings, which were [modeled after](#) Hezbollah's attacks on American and Western forces in Lebanon in the early 1980s. [For more information on Saif al Adel, see *FDD's Long War Journal* report, [Analysis: 2 wanted al Qaeda leaders operate in Iran](#)]

Abu Muhammad al Masri, who was also known as Abdullah Ahmed Abdullah, was also an original member of Egyptian Islamic Jihad and was complicit in the 1998 Kenya and Tanzania embassy bombings. He served as a key Al Qaeda leader and was a member of its central council. He was in the line of succession to lead Al Qaeda before he was gunned down in Tehran on Aug. 7, 2020, the 22 year anniversary of the Africa embassy bombings. [For more information Abu Muhammad al Masri, see *FDD's Long War Journal* reports, [Analysis: 2 wanted al Qaeda leaders operate in Iran](#) and [Analysis: Al Qaeda's deputy emir killed in Iran](#)]

Abu Khayr al Masri, whose real name was Abdullah Muhammad Rajab Abd al Rahman, also was a original member of Egyptian Islamic Jihad before rising to the top ranks of Al Qaeda. U.S. intelligence identified Abu Khayr as the chairman of Al Qaeda's management council, according to the [Washington Post](#). Abu Khayr also previously served as Al Qaeda's "chief of foreign relations" and in that capacity he was a "liaison to the Taliban" in Afghanistan.

Abu Khayr, along with a number of senior Al Qaeda leaders, relocated to Syria in 2016 to reorganize Al Qaeda's network in the country and unite sparring jihadist factions. At the time, Al Qaeda identified Ab Khayr as Zawahiri's "general deputy." Abu Khayr's time in Syria was short lived, as he was killed in a U.S. drone strike in Idlib on Feb. 26, 2017. [For more information Abu Khayr al Masri, see *FDD's Long War Journal* report, [Zawahiri's deputy sought to 'unify' Syrian rebels](#).]

The presence of top Al Qaeda leaders inside Iran has been documented by the U.S government in numerous designations over the years. Other senior leaders known to have been operating inside Iran include 'Abd al Rahman al Maghrebi, [Yasin al Suri](#), [Sa'ad bin Laden \(now deceased\)](#), and [Mustafa Hamid](#). [For a list of Al Qaeda leaders, operatives and facilitators operating in Iran, see *FDD's Long War Journal* report, [U.S. identifies additional al Qaeda leaders in Iran](#).]

In addition to keeping tabs on senior Al Qaeda figures inside Iran, the [U.S. Treasury and State Departments have repeatedly exposed](#) Iran's "secret deal" with the Sunni jihadists. Under an agreement with the Iranian regime, Al Qaeda has maintained its "[core facilitation pipeline](#)" inside Iran. The Iranians have allowed this facilitation network to operate even though Iran and Al Qaeda are on opposite sides of the conflicts in Syria and Yemen.

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The photograph shows, from left to right, Saif al Adel, Abu Muhammad al Masri, and Abu Abu al Khayr al Masri. The photograph casts significant doubt on the assertions that Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corp and Ministry of Intelligence kept these and other Al Qaeda leaders under strict house arrest.

HEADLINE	09/03 Bulletin: 9/11 anniversary to inspire HVEs
SOURCE	https://www.hstoday.us/federal-pages/dhs/u-s-intel-says-9-11-anniversary-may-inspire-homegrown-violent-extremists/
GIST	<p>A U.S. joint intelligence bulletin obtained by <i>Newsweek</i> has warned that foreign militant groups could exploit the upcoming anniversary of 9/11, one year since the U.S. military withdrew from the two-decade war launched in Afghanistan in the wake of the attacks, to inspire homegrown violent extremists (HVEs).</p> <p>The bulletin, dated September 2 and issued by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC), stated that the three agencies “expect foreign terrorist organizations (FTOs) and their supporters will seek to exploit the 21st anniversary of 9/11, the one-year anniversary of the US withdrawal from Afghanistan, and the recent death of AQ overall leader Ayman al-Zawahiri in their messaging, which may inspire some HVEs.”</p> <p>Zawahiri succeeded Al-Qaeda founder Osama bin Laden, who led the group until he was killed by U.S. forces during a raid in Pakistan in 2011. Early last month, Biden announced that Zawahiri was killed by a U.S. drone strike in Afghanistan in late July.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/04 Soft targets risk from malicious drones
SOURCE	https://www.hstoday.us/featured/assessing-the-risk-to-soft-targets-from-malicious-drones/
GIST	<p>In Christchurch, New Zealand, in 2019, Brenton Tarrant attacked two mosques using multiple shotguns and rifles, killing 51 and wounding 40. The attack was far from the first on a soft target – targets where lots of people congregate, often with limited to no security measures. However, what made this attack unusual was the use of a drone. Specifically, Tarrant used a drone to conduct reconnaissance on the Masjid an-Nur mosque prior to the attack.</p> <p>The Christchurch shooting is emblematic of the growing threat that drones pose to soft targets. Terrorists can use drones for planning and reconnaissance, to collect and distribute propaganda after an attack, or</p>

even as weapons in and of themselves. A major challenge that law enforcement and homeland security officials face is that not all soft targets are created equal. Government agencies tasked with protecting soft targets need to carefully parse the risk across threat, vulnerability, and consequence. That careful assessment should inform defensive approaches, including counter-drone testing, acquisition, deployment, and training.

Threat

Post-September 11 counterterrorism measures have pushed terrorists toward soft targets. After September 11, the United States government drastically increased security on a wide range of potential terrorist targets, from U.S. military bases to airports. However, limited resources and competing policy priorities mean that not every place where people congregate en masse can be protected. Installing metal detectors and placing bomb-sniffing dogs and armed guards at every church, concert venue, and school is just not practicable. At the same time, major efforts to disrupt and destroy terrorist networks has meant terrorist capacity is reduced. Complex attacks against hard targets are more difficult and do not mesh well with strategies like al-Qaeda's "death by a thousand cuts." So hitting soft targets makes a lot of sense.

As a result, terrorists are increasingly adopting drones as a terrorism tool. Aum Shinrikyo was the first to experiment with drones in 1994, though they ultimately did not use any. In the decades since, terrorist drone use has grown significantly. Terrorists have used drones to collect intelligence, spread propaganda, and carry out attacks. Drones offer terrorists both advantages and disadvantages when it comes to attacks. Drones can evade ground-based defenses and allow the terrorist to attack from a more secure area; however, drones also typically have limited payloads.

Drone threats to soft targets vary broadly. Drones may be used as reconnaissance for non-drone attacks, as the Christchurch shooter did. Drones might carry Raspberry Pis to carry out cyber espionage. Drones might carry bombs, flamethrowers, or chemical or biological weapons (real or hoaxed). Each approach requires very different terrorist motivations and capabilities – using a drone for reconnaissance is almost trivial, while a multi-drone attack using contagious biological agents would be quite difficult and appeal only to the most apocalyptic organizations.

Vulnerability

Soft-target vulnerability should be assessed based on the characteristic advantages and disadvantages of drones. For example, a church may have few points of entry and exit, and during services they may be closed. By contrast, a stadium could have relatively few points of entry and exit too, but may also have an open-air roof through which a drone could directly drop. Stadiums often have ground-based defenses, so drones offer a real advantage in bypassing them. A drone could strike a large outdoor event (like a concert) from pretty much anywhere, but the limited payload of drones mean terrorists may still prefer other means of attack in such instances.

Vulnerability and drone defenses can also interact in complex ways. For terrorists, a big event like the Super Bowl is a target-rich environment. The stands may be filled end-to-end. A drone-dropped bomb does not need to be terribly accurate to cause mass harm. However, such events can also be expected to have much greater security, including counter-drone systems. By contrast, a minor game may have less security, but targeting could be more difficult. Large portions of the stands may be empty, and attendees may more readily flee or move throughout the space.

Technological advances can affect vulnerability as well. Most counter-drone systems on the market jam either radio-frequency or GPS signals. Many autonomous drones that do not require human operation may be immune to those defenses. Similarly, larger numbers of drones could be deployed to overwhelm the defenses. But more autonomous drones come with costs in reducing attacker flexibility, because they are limited to pre-planned flight routes.

Consequence

Wannabe drone terrorists face significant trade-offs in payload sizes, costs, and acquisition difficulties. A typical hobbyist drone may only carry a pound or two. Heavy-lift drones can carry well over 50 pounds, with some even reaching a ton or so. But those can come with significant costs, reaching hundreds of thousands of dollars for the system. By comparison, the cost of renting a truck that can carry multiple tons is minimal. Additionally, recent mass shootings show terrorists can just buy a gun to achieve similar results: the 2017 Las Vegas shooter used various rifles to kill 61 and injure about 867 at a music festival.

Mass-casualty drone attacks are definitely plausible, but again can vary on the details and interact with threat and vulnerability in complex ways. Terrorists might use numerous drones to cause more harm, and better overwhelm defenses. In a 2013 attack, 13 drones attacked the Russian Khmeimim Air Base in Syria. The group who took responsibility claimed to destroy an S-400 missile launcher, though the Russian government denies this. Likewise, drones could potentially carry chemical or biological weapons payloads – commercial agricultural drones in particular could be quite effective in deploying those agents. Aum Shinrikyo explored this possibility in 1994, before settling on the Tokyo subway attacks. But these types of attacks are also much rarer, in part because they require much higher resources, planning, and skills to pull off. A drone attack with a nerve agent requires first obtaining the nerve agent – no simple task.

Implications

Simple drones are easy to acquire, even for lone-wolf terrorists. An attacker can just go on Amazon and order a drone for a couple hundred dollars. The challenge for law enforcement and homeland security officials charged with protecting soft targets is thus vastly more difficult. Officials should take a more nuanced approach, recognizing the significant variability in threats, vulnerabilities, and consequences. Security approaches should be tailored to the details of facility types, and closely informed by intelligence on the changing threat environment. President Biden's proposal to create a common drone threat database could be quite helpful in building that understanding, especially if combined with common reporting structures to enable information sharing across local, state, and federal government agencies. Threat-informed planning scenarios should also inform testing, acquisition, deployment, and training around counter-drone systems. The terrorist drone threat to soft targets is growing; the United States should be ready.

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HEADLINE	09/05 Kabul: Russia embassy blast kills 6
SOURCE	https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/britains-truss-expected-be-named-conservative-leader-new-pm-2022-09-05/
GIST	<p>KABUL, Sept 5 (Reuters) - Two Russian embassy staff in Kabul were among six people killed when a suicide bomber detonated explosives near the entrance of the embassy, in a blast that injured at least 10 others, the Russian Foreign Ministry and Afghan officials said on Monday.</p> <p>Police said the attacker was shot dead by armed guards as he approached the gate, in one of the first such attacks since the Taliban took power last year.</p> <p>"The suicide attacker before reaching the target, was recognised and shot by Russian embassy (Taliban) guards ... there is no information about casualties yet," Mawlawi Sabir, the head of the police district where the attack took place, told Reuters.</p> <p>The Russian Foreign Ministry said in a statement that an unknown militant set off an explosive device near the entrance to the consular section of the embassy around at 10:50 a.m. Kabul time.</p> <p>"As a result of the attack, two employees of the diplomatic mission were killed, and there are also victims among Afghan citizens," the ministry said.</p> <p>The four others killed were Afghan civilians, Khalid Zadran, a Kabul police spokesman said.</p> <p>Russia is one of the few countries to have maintained an embassy in Kabul after the Taliban took over the country more than a year ago. Although Moscow does not officially recognise the Taliban's government, they have been in talks with officials over an agreement to supply gasoline and other commodities.</p>

	<p>The United Nations' mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) condemned the blast.</p> <p>"In light of recent events, UNAMA stresses the need for the de facto authorities to take steps to ensure the safety and security of the people as well as diplomatic missions," the UN wrote on Twitter, in reference to the Taliban government.</p> <p>During the decades-long Taliban insurgency against the western-backed Afghan government, bombings targeting foreign missions were a regular occurrence in Kabul, especially in recent years, with embassies and hotels fortifying themselves with razor wire and blast walls.</p> <p>Such incidents have decreased dramatically since the insurgent group swept to power in August 2021.</p> <p>Since then, attacks - some of them claimed by Islamic State - mainly targeted the Taliban and civilian targets such as mosques.</p> <p>No group has claimed responsibility for Monday's blast.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/03 Somalia: al-Shabab kill 20, burn food trucks
SOURCE	https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/sep/3/al-shabab-kills-at-least-20-burns-food-trucks-in-s/
GIST	<p>MOGADISHU, Somalia (AP) — Somali state media and residents say the extremist group al-Shabab killed at least 20 people and burned seven vehicles transporting food in the Hiran region Saturday morning, and the government's drought envoy called it "devastating" for communities in the grip of a severe drought.</p> <p>Residents said the attack was in retaliation for a local mobilization against the al-Qaida-affiliated group that holds significant parts of central and southern Somalia. The extremist group's presence complicates an already challenging response to the drought that has killed thousands of people. Some areas are on the brink of famine.</p> <p>Drought envoy Abdirahman Abdishakur noted that al-Shabab also had blown up wells for water in Hiran in recent days.</p> <p>"The victims were drivers and passengers transporting food supplies from Beletweyne to Mahas and a total of seven trucks carrying food and vehicles used by the passengers were set ablaze," resident Hassan Abdulle told The Associated Press by phone.</p> <p>The attack came a day after government forces destroyed landmines that al-Shabab had planted on the busy road connecting Beletweyne and Mataban with the intent to target travelers.</p> <p>Al-Shabab confirmed the attack and claimed to have killed 20 locally mobilized militia members.</p> <p>The Somali government has condemned the "barbaric" attack and reiterated its support for local mobilization against the extremist group.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/03 Hurdles from over-the-horizon US strikes
SOURCE	https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/sep/3/more-questions-answers-zawahiri-strike-afghanistan/
GIST	<p>On its face, last month's strike on al Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri proved U.S. forces can still carry out military and intelligence missions in Afghanistan even with American boots no longer on the ground.</p> <p>Beneath the surface, however, counterterrorism insiders and foreign policy analysts say the bombing of al-Zawahiri's safehouse in Kabul only exposed much deeper long-term problems for the U.S and the seemingly never-ending fight against radical Islamic extremism. Chief among them are the clear links</p>

between the Taliban and al Qaeda, which some specialists describe as virtually unbreakable and likely to grow even stronger as more time passes, with the Taliban cementing their rule and no steady U.S. presence in Afghanistan to act as a counterbalance.

The ability of the Pentagon and the U.S. intelligence community to track and contain the spread of terrorist networks in Afghanistan may be severely limited in the years to come. The al-Zawahiri strike, analysts say, was something of a unique case. The al Qaeda leader — after eluding a global manhunt for more than two decades — was apparently undone because of his own tradecraft sloppiness, including a penchant for spending time on his balcony in clear view of anyone on the streets below. Once U.S. intelligence could positively identify him, that habit made him a relatively easy target for long-range U.S. drones launched from outside Afghanistan.

But more complex missions remain difficult, if not impossible, to organize from “over the horizon.” Special forces raids involving ground teams — such as the 2011 mission in Abbottabad, Pakistan, that killed Osama bin Laden, or the 2019 operation in Syria that killed Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi — would be exceedingly difficult in Afghanistan, for a host of logistical and geopolitical reasons.

“The strike on al-Zawahiri is really the best of times and the worst of times,” said Nathan Sales, the State Department’s counterterrorism coordinator under former President Trump. “The upside is it shows that in exceptional cases, the U.S. still has the capacity to take terrorists off the battlefield. The downside, which I think deserves more attention, is it shows al Qaeda and the Taliban continue to collaborate to the point that al Qaeda’s head honcho felt comfortable living in a Taliban safehouse right in the heart of the capital.”

If that collaboration eventually leads to threats to U.S. interests abroad or perhaps even the American homeland, a more significant military mission would face serious hurdles.

“It would be much harder, operationally and diplomatically, to carry out an Abbottabad-type raid or a Baghdadi-type raid,” Mr. Sales said. “Where are you going to stage your troops? We could do Abbottabad because we had a substantial U.S. military presence in Afghanistan. We could do Baghdadi because we had a substantial troop presence in Syria and Iraq.”

Both Mr. Trump and President Biden, who share little in common politically, refused to budge from their position that it was past time for U.S. troops to leave Afghanistan, despite pleas from top American generals to keep a small but symbolically potent force in place to bolster the U.S.-backed government in Kabul.

Mr. Trump opened direct diplomatic negotiations with the Taliban despite harsh criticism from within his own party, sealing a withdrawal agreement with the insurgents without first getting buy-in from the Kabul government. Biden pushed ahead with the withdrawal process and timetable even as critics said the Taliban were not holding up their end of the accord and U.S. military advisers privately warned him that the Afghan government was sure to collapse in short order without American and Western backing.

Both administrations have sought to turn America’s attention, militarily and geopolitically, toward Asia, as China continues its rise as both a military and economic power, but some argue forcefully that the new reality in Afghanistan makes that more difficult. Instead, more than two decades after the 9/11 attacks, the U.S. finds itself forced to keep at least one eye on Afghanistan and its potential to again become the epicenter and sanctuary for global Islamic extremism movements.

“The overall strategic picture emerging from enduring al Qaeda-Taliban association is bad news for the U.S. government, which has been wanting to pivot away from the fight against terrorism toward strategic competition with China and Russia,” Asfandiyar Mir, a senior expert at the U.S. Institute of Peace’s Asia Center, said during a recent forum. “It appears the U.S. government still faces formidable terrorist adversaries who are able to exploit grievances, alliances and state support to recover from losses and stay in the fight. America can’t afford to take the eye off its terrorist adversaries.”

As a tactical matter, the U.S. still faces a host of unanswered questions about what it can and cannot do to stop the spread of extremist forces in Afghanistan.

Over the past year, for example, the Biden administration has had little apparent success finding new countries near Afghanistan willing to host American counterterrorism assets for the long term. That lack of staging areas would greatly complicate any potential missions relying on ground forces, making them far more dangerous.

Potential hosts in the region, particularly Central Asian nations such as Uzbekistan, have come under pressure from Russia, along with behind-the-scenes pressure from China, to deny U.S. overtures.

Even Pakistan, which has its own complex two-decade history with the U.S. on matters of counterterrorism, is walking a fine line on the issue. Last month, Taliban officials publicly accused Islamabad of allowing U.S. drones to fly through Pakistani air space to conduct missions in Afghanistan, most notably the strike on al-Zawahiri.

Pakistani officials denied the charges.

“In the absence of any evidence ... such conjectural allegations are highly regrettable and defy the norms of responsible diplomatic conduct,” Foreign Ministry spokesman Asim Iftikhar Ahmad said in a statement, according to Voice of America.

History repeats itself?

Mr. Ahmad also publicly admonished the Taliban to live up to the agreement it signed with the Trump administration in early 2020, in particular not to allow terrorists free rein in the country as happened during the first Taliban regime in the lead-up to the 9/11 attacks, which were conceived and prepared by bin Laden, al-Zawahiri and other top al Qaeda figures from camps inside Afghanistan.

“We urge the Afghan interim authorities to ensure the fulfillment of international commitments made by Afghanistan not to allow the use of its territory for terrorism against any country,” he said.

That deal called on the Taliban to never again allow terrorist groups to use Afghanistan as a base of operations and not to conduct operations against U.S. and allied forces as the deal was being implemented. In exchange, the U.S. would withdraw all of its troops from the country.

But the Taliban offered little evidence it intended to follow through on that process. Throughout the months-long American military drawdown, reports from the Pentagon, the United Nations and other organizations consistently said that al Qaeda remained present in Afghanistan, despite the Taliban’s public assurances to the contrary. Al-Zawahiri’s comfortable living arrangement in Kabul offered more proof that the Taliban is either unwilling or unable to purge the country of terrorists.

In addition, a ruthless offshoot of Islamic State, a rival to al Qaeda, has been able to establish its own beachhead inside Afghanistan.

By following through on the withdrawal anyway, and executing it in such a chaotic fashion with the whole world watching, the Biden administration has made America less safe, critics say.

“We are more likely to be attacked like New York City was 20 some years ago, we’re more likely to be attacked from [Afghanistan] today than we were just one year ago,” former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said during a recent appearance on the Cats Roundtable radio program.

As former President Trump’s secretary of state, Mr. Pompeo was in a key position during U.S. negotiations with the Taliban. But Mr. Trump and his advisors insist they would not have forged ahead with the pullout as Mr. Biden did in the face of clear evidence that the Taliban leaders had failed to live up

to their promises, or without a clearer plan for how the U.S. would maintain counterterrorism capabilities in the theater.

The Biden administration argues the U.S. has already reaped strategic benefits from the Afghan pullout — being able to focus heavily on the Russia-Ukraine war without distractions, for one thing — and a recent U.S. intelligence community assessment offered a relatively optimistic take on the state of terror movements inside Afghanistan a year after the American troop pullout.

The joint U.S. agency assessment concluded that al Qaeda so far has not been able to reconstitute the network it once had in the country and that only a “handful” of the once-feared terror group’s members remain, the New York Times reported last month.

But with no American troops in Afghanistan and a Taliban government that’s proved to be unreliable, military officials fear the country could eventually unravel to the point that America is forced to return.

Asked recently whether U.S. troops may need to go back to Afghanistan, retired Gen. Kenneth F. McKenzie seemed to leave that door open.

“I know this: It is in the best long-term interest of the United States to not allow these centers of violent extremism to grow and expand in Afghanistan. And I believe under the current Taliban regime, that’s probably what’s going to happen,” said Gen. McKenzie, who led U.S. Central Command during the 2021 withdrawal.

“The last time I was looking at intelligence, that was a position we had,” Gen. McKenzie told Fox News Sunday in a recent interview. “I follow it like everybody else does now, in the newspaper and other sources. But I see nothing to change that opinion that the threat is growing in Afghanistan and it’s merely a matter of time.”

Biden administration officials say that the U.S. is prepared to deal with the threat. They stress that the strike on al-Zawahiri proves that the U.S., despite its limited capabilities in Afghanistan, can still take out terrorist figures when necessary.

“Ask the members of al Qaeda how safe they feel in Afghanistan right now,” White House national security spokesperson John Kirby told reporters last month following the al-Zawahiri strike.

“I think we proved ... that it isn’t a safe haven and it isn’t going to be going forward,” he said.

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Suspicious, Unusual

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HEADLINE	09/03 Spontaneous combustion of soil sparks fire
SOURCE	https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/spontaneous-combustion-soil-flower-pot-sparks-house-fire/ZR2AE3RSYFCAZPA62X2FNIPUVI/
GIST	<p>LAKE STEVENS, Wash. — A house in Lake Stevens was damaged by fire on Wednesday afternoon due to the spontaneous combustion of a material used for planting.</p> <p>At 3:50 p.m., firefighters with Snohomish Regional Fire and Rescue were called to a home near the 3100 block of 78th Avenue Southeast.</p> <p>When crews arrived, they found the entire back side of the home on fire as flames had spread to the attic.</p> <p>Firefighters said they cut holes in the roof to allow for ventilation and were able to put out the fire quickly.</p>

	<p>No injuries were reported.</p> <p>The fire marshal determined the fire was caused by soil in a flower pot on the deck that had spontaneously combusted.</p> <p>While fire officials say this kind of incident is rare, they recommended keeping dry combustible materials away from one's home.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/06 'Doomsday glacier' hanging on; rapid melt
SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2022/09/05/world/thwaites-doomsday-glacier-sea-level-climate/index.html
GIST	<p>(CNN)Antarctica's so-called "doomsday glacier" -- nicknamed because of its high risk of collapse and threat to global sea level -- has the potential to rapidly retreat in the coming years, scientists say, amplifying concerns over the extreme sea level rise that would accompany its potential demise.</p> <p>The Thwaites Glacier, capable of raising sea level by several feet, is eroding along its underwater base as the planet warms. In a study published Monday in the journal Nature Geoscience, scientists mapped the glacier's historical retreat, hoping to learn from its past what the glacier will likely do in the future.</p> <p>They found that at some point in the past two centuries, the base of the glacier dislodged from the seabed and retreated at a rate of 1.3 miles (2.1 kilometers) per year. That's twice the rate that scientists have observed in the past decade or so.</p> <p>That swift disintegration possibly occurred "as recently as the mid-20th century," Alastair Graham, the study's lead author and a marine geophysicist at the University of South Florida, said in a news release.</p> <p>It suggests the Thwaites has the capability to undergo a rapid retreat in the near future, once it recedes past a seabed ridge that is helping to keep it in check.</p> <p>"Thwaites is really holding on today by its fingernails, and we should expect to see big changes over small timescales in the future -- even from one year to the next -- once the glacier retreats beyond a shallow ridge in its bed," Robert Larter, a marine geophysicist and one of the study's co-authors from the British Antarctic Survey, said in the release.</p> <p>The Thwaites Glacier, located in West Antarctica, is one of the widest on Earth and is larger than the state of Florida. But it's just a fraction of the West Antarctic ice sheet, which holds enough ice to raise sea level by up to 16 feet, according to NASA.</p> <p>As the climate crisis has accelerated, this region has been closely monitored because of its rapid melting and its capacity for widespread coastal destruction.</p> <p>The Thwaites Glacier itself has concerned scientists for decades. As early as 1973, researchers questioned whether it was at high risk of collapse. Nearly a decade later, they found that -- because the glacier is grounded to a seabed, rather than to dry land -- warm ocean currents could melt the glacier from underneath, causing it to destabilize from below.</p> <p>It was because of that research that scientists began calling the region around the Thwaites the "weak underbelly of the West Antarctic ice sheet."</p> <p>In the 21st century, researchers began documenting the Thwaites' rapid retreat in an alarming series of studies.</p>

	<p>In 2001, satellite data showed the grounding line was receding by around 0.6 miles (1 kilometer) per year. In 2020, scientists found evidence that warm water was indeed flowing across the base of the glacier, melting it from underneath.</p> <p>And then in 2021, a study showed the Thwaites Ice Shelf, which helps to stabilize the glacier and hold the ice back from flowing freely into the ocean, could shatter within five years.</p> <p>"From the satellite data, we're seeing these big fractures spreading across the ice shelf surface, essentially weakening the fabric of the ice; kind of a bit like a windscreen crack," Peter Davis, an oceanographer with the British Antarctic Survey, told CNN in 2021. "It's slowly spreading across the ice shelf and eventually it's going to fracture into lots of different pieces."</p> <p>Monday's findings, which suggest the Thwaites is capable of receding at a much faster pace than recently thought, were documented on a 20-hour mission in extreme conditions that mapped an underwater area the size of Houston, according to a news release.</p> <p>Graham said that this research "was truly a once in a lifetime mission," but that the team hopes to return soon to gather samples from the seabed so they can determine when the previous rapid retreats occurred. That could help scientists predict future changes to the "doomsday glacier," which scientists had previously assumed would be slow to undergo change -- something Graham said this study disproves.</p> <p>"Just a small kick to the Thwaites could lead to a big response," Graham said.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/05 Voyager 1, 2 still interstellar envoys at 45
SOURCE	https://www.wired.com/story/voyager-1-and-2-humanitys-interstellar-envoys-soldier-on-at-45/
GIST	<p>TODAY IS THE 45th anniversary of the launch of Voyager 1, one of humanity's iconic twin emissaries to the cosmos. (Its sibling, Voyager 2, launched a couple of weeks earlier.) Now in the dark, far reaches of interstellar space—more than 10 billion miles from home, where our sun looks like any other bright star—the pair are still doing science. They carry with them the Golden Records, bearing the sounds and symbols of Earth, should some extraterrestrial ever rendezvous with one of the spacecraft and become curious about its distant sender.</p> <p>"I've been following the arc of Voyager over my career," says Linda Spilker, Voyager's deputy project scientist at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, who started at the agency in 1977, the year the probes launched. "I'm amazed at how long both of these spacecraft, Voyager 1 and Voyager 2, have been able to keep going and return unique science about new places that no spacecraft has visited before. And now they've become interstellar travelers. How cool is that?"</p> <p>The two car-sized probes, each with a 12-foot antenna mounted on top, had one primary task: to visit the gas giants in our own solar system. After their launches, the Voyagers' paths diverged, but they both took advantage of a rare planetary lineup, snapping groundbreaking photos as they flew by Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune and revealed tantalizing details about the planets' moons. By the end of 1989, they'd completed that mission. In 1990, Voyager 1 capped it by turning around and taking a poignant image of our own world, which astronomer and science communicator Carl Sagan dubbed the Pale Blue Dot.</p> <p>"Look again at that dot. That's here. That's home. That's us. On it everyone you love, everyone you know, everyone you ever heard of, every human being who ever was, has lived out their lives," Sagan wrote. The image of the Earth from a cosmic perspective—a mere "mote of dust suspended in a moonbeam," as he put it—became nearly as memorable as the Earthrise photo taken by an Apollo 8 astronaut showing the planet as seen from the moon.</p> <p>The two probes, which run on nuclear-powered systems called radioisotope thermoelectric generators (RTGs), kept flying. Our solar system has no clear boundary, but in the 2000s they crossed the "termination shock," where solar wind particles abruptly slow below the speed of sound due to pressure</p>

from the gas and magnetic fields in interstellar space. Then in the 2010s, they breached the heliopause, the boundary between the solar wind and the interstellar wind.

With four instruments operating on Voyager 1 and five aboard Voyager 2, they now have a new job: measuring the magnetic field strength, the density of the plasma, and the energy and direction of charged particles in the environment they're traveling through. "The purpose of the interstellar mission is to measure the sun's effects as we go further and further from Earth. We're trying to find out how the sun's heliosphere interacts with interstellar space," says Suzanne Dodd, project manager of the Voyager interstellar mission at JPL. Voyager 1 is currently 14.6 billion miles from home, and Voyager 2 is 12.1 billion miles away, but for perspective, the nearest star is some 25 trillion miles away. (NASA maintains a tracker of their journeys.) It's a remarkable coda for their mission, decades after the probes completed their main goals.

But they've always had a secondary task: conveying a message to any aliens from beyond the solar system who might one day peek inside a craft. Each one carries a Golden Record, which looks like vinyl but is made of metal. A team of scientists and artists, including Sagan and Frank Drake, who died last Friday, packed music, nature sounds, messages, photos, and more on each record—and they included players and instructions, should anyone find them. The ambitious project seeks to tell a story about humanity, what humans aspire to, and our world. It includes the music of Bach and Chuck Berry, and images of families, homes, and scientific advances. "The purpose of the record was to try to answer questions that we would have," says Jon Lomberg, a scientific artist and the designer for the Golden Records team. "What were the beings like who sent it? What do they look like? What do they act like? What was their world like? So it's really a self-portrait."

Unlike the search for extraterrestrial intelligence, or SETI, the records are not designed to be a prelude to first contact. In fact, the Golden Records might be found millions of years from now, perhaps when human civilizations no longer exist. "It's more like finding a fossil," says Lomberg. "You can't talk to the dinosaurs. This is a relic—our obituary in a way, the memento that we were once here."

The Voyager probes were preceded by the Pioneer missions, which carried small metal plaques with symbolic messages. (The pair of Pioneers left the solar system in the 1980s and '90s, but they're no longer functioning.) But no space mission since has incorporated a similar record of humanity—though NASA's New Horizons, for example, which flew by Pluto in 2015, offered another chance. That was a missed opportunity, Lomberg says, although it might still be possible to send a digital message to the spacecraft's computer. That would be durable, but it would not last as long as the Golden Records.

The Voyagers have had a tangible influence on space exploration ever since. Their success inspired NASA and other agencies to revisit the outer planets, especially Jupiter and Saturn, and their myriad moons. These subsequent missions include Galileo, Juno, Cassini, and the European Space Agency's Huygens lander, plus new probes in the works, such as the Europa Clipper, Dragonfly, ESA's JUICE, and potential voyages to Uranus and Saturn's moon Enceladus.

The Voyagers influenced pop culture too. The first Star Trek movie in 1979 included an alien spacecraft called "V'ger," which was actually an altered fictional "Voyager 6." Voyager and the Golden Records have turned up in TV shows like Saturday Night Live, The West Wing, and—of course—The X-Files. The composer Dario Marianelli even wrote a Voyager-inspired violin concerto.

The pair of spacecraft have lasted far longer than anyone imagined—and, Dodd says, the instruments are working and the data is still great. But they're showing signs of age. In May, she and her team encountered a glitch in Voyager 1's telemetry data, which would normally provide information to scientists back home about what the probe's instruments are doing and whether they're working properly. The data had been coming back garbled. Addressing the issue was complicated by the vast distance involved, since messages to and from Voyager 1 now take nearly 22 hours.

Then last week, the team figured out what was wrong. Apparently, the attitude control system had suddenly started sending the telemetry data through the wrong computer, which was no longer working

properly. They resolved the problem by routing the data back to the correct computer. “The spacecraft is healthy, it’s happy. It’s returning science data just beautifully,” Spilker says.

Even if Dodd, Spilker, and their colleagues can keep resolving these kinds of technical issues, however, the spacecraft have a more enduring problem: their power supplies. Their RTG systems provide power by converting heat from the radioactive decay of plutonium-238 into electricity. But after 45 years, the fuel is now generating 4 watts less per year. Dodd and her team have turned off any systems and instruments not involved in the interstellar mission—and in 2019, they started turning off heaters in some of the instruments that are still running. That added a couple of years to the spacecrafts’ lifespans.

Nevertheless, the Voyager probes might only have a few years, or perhaps a decade, left in them. Eventually, their dwindling power won’t be sufficient to run their instruments. “At that point, the Voyagers will become our silent ambassadors,” Spilker says.

As they hurtle at 35,000 miles per hour into the unknown with their powered-down machines, they will still carry humanity’s message in a bottle. “The Golden Record, a piece of human civilization, a piece of technology with a 1970s stamp on it—that is going to persevere. It’s not degrading. It’s going to last for billions of years. It’s going to outlast the planet that it came from. That’s mind-blowing kind of stuff,” says Jim Bell, a planetary scientist at Arizona State University and the author of a book on the Voyager mission’s 40th anniversary.

Bell speculates that it might not be aliens, but our own descendants, who ultimately spot the far-flung spacecraft. “My prediction is that the message really is going to be for us. We’re going to be the ones who go find it—in the far future, when it becomes easy to travel and be tourists and see the Voyagers,” he says. “We’ll be thinking: Wasn’t that one of the most amazing things we did as a species in the 20th century?”

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Crime, Criminals

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HEADLINE	09/05 ‘Fat Leonard’ in Navy’s worst scandal flees
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/sep/06/fat-leonard-contractor-in-us-navys-worst-corruption-scandal-flees-house-arrest
GIST	<p>A Malaysian businessman who pleaded guilty in the US navy’s worst corruption scandal has escaped house arrest in San Diego after cutting off his monitoring bracelet, federal authorities have said.</p> <p>Leonard Glenn Francis, known as Fat Leonard, who pleaded guilty in 2015 to offering \$500,000 in bribes to navy officers, was due to be sentenced in a few weeks.</p> <p>The supervisory deputy, US Marshal Omar Castillo, said Francis fled from his home on Sunday morning, the San Diego Union-Tribune reported. Officers who arrived at the property found it empty but discovered parts of his broken GPS tracker bracelet.</p> <p>Francis, who ran a military contracting company in Singapore, is accused of offering the services of sex workers, as well as lavish meals that cost thousands of dollars to gain insider information and influence. Navy officers were given luxury gifts of wine, Cuban cigars and sums of cash, according to prosecutors.</p> <p>In turn, they disclosed classified information and redirected military vessels to ports where his company, Glenn Defense Marine Asia, could charge fake tariffs and fees.</p> <p>Francis and his company, which provided navy ships in the Pacific with food, fuel and water, are accused of overcharging the navy by almost \$35m.</p>

	<p>Officers involved in the scam called themselves the Lion's King Harem, Brotherhood, Wolfpack as they sought to recruit others to the scam, according to prosecutors.</p> <p>Francis was arrested in a San Diego hotel room during a sting in 2013, and pleaded guilty two years later. He has had various health problems, including kidney cancer, and has been held at a private residence since 2018.</p> <p>He had been acting as a cooperating witness for a federal prosecutor but was due to be sentenced on 22 September.</p> <p>Four navy officers have been found guilty in relation to the scandal. A further 29 people, including naval officials, contractors and Francis, had pleaded guilty, US media said.</p> <p>Neighbours told authorities they saw U-Haul removal trucks outside the property in which Francis was held in the days leading up to his escape, Castillo said, according to the report by the San Diego Union-Tribune. "He was planning this out, that's for sure," Castillo added.</p> <p>Castillo said law enforcement agencies would be notified.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/05 Spokane police shoot, kill man armed w/rifle
SOURCE	https://komonews.com/news/local/spokane-police-say-they-shot-killed-man-armed-with-rifle
GIST	<p>SPOKANE, Wash. (AP) — Spokane police shot and killed an armed man who had an anti-harassment order against him, authorities said.</p> <p>The shooting occurred Sunday night in the northern Hillyard neighborhood.</p> <p>A resident called police asking them to serve a neighbor with a court-issued anti-harassment order, the Spokane Police Department said in a news release. The neighbor left before officers could serve the legal document.</p> <p>The resident called police again around 10 p.m., reporting that the neighbor had returned with what appeared to be an AR-15-style rifle.</p> <p>Multiple officers responded to the scene. The suspect was shot during the encounter, the news release said. Police said they found a long gun near the suspect's body.</p> <p>The suspect was transported to a local hospital where he was pronounced dead, authorities said. No officers were injured.</p> <p>Names of the suspect and officers have not been released by police, the Spokesman-Review reports. Details of the court order were not immediately available.</p> <p>The officers involved in the shooting have been placed on administrative leave under standard procedure, according to the police news release. Officers were wearing body cameras during the incident.</p> <p>The Spokane Independent Investigative Response team will conduct the investigation. The multiagency team in eastern Washington is responsible for probing deadly force incidents involving officers. The Spokane County Sheriff's Office will lead the investigation, authorities said.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/05 Seattle's Yesler Terrace shooting: 2 injured
SOURCE	https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/two-shot-seattles-yesler-terrace-neighborhood/Y6JRGKIH65CZTK4P7BQI54S5AU/

GIST	<p>SEATTLE — Seattle police are investigating after two people were injured in a shooting in the Yesler Terrace neighborhood on early Monday morning.</p> <p>At about 1:30 a.m., officers on patrol heard shots fired near Boren Avenue South and East Yesler Way.</p> <p>Police then encountered two shooting victims, a 41-year-old woman and a 63-year-old man, in the 100 block of Boren Avenue South.</p> <p>Officers began first aid until transferring care to Seattle Fire Department medics.</p> <p>Both victims were transported to Harborview Medical Center, where the woman was listed in stable condition and the man was in serious condition, according to SPD.</p> <p>Police spoke with witnesses who reported that a person drove away from the scene before police arrived.</p> <p>Officers also recovered more than a dozen shell casings from the scene.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/05 Federal Way: police kill man armed w/knife
SOURCE	https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/federal-way/man-killed-federal-way-transit-center-police-shooting/281-184d1c55-0901-4039-b303-9d6afd89781d
GIST	<p>FEDERAL WAY, Wash. — A man armed with a knife was shot and killed by police officers at the Federal Way Transit Center Sunday night.</p> <p>According to the Federal Way Police Department (FWPD), officers were called to the transit center just before 9 p.m. after a man refused to get off a bus. Callers reported to 911 dispatchers that the man, a 54-year-old from Soap Lake, appeared to be under the influence and possibly suffering from a mental health crisis.</p> <p>A spokesperson for the FWPD said a crisis negotiator responded to the scene “to assist with de-escalation and communication.” While attempting to communicate and negotiate with the man, police said he tried to start the bus in an attempt to drive away but was unsuccessful.</p> <p>When the man exited the bus, police said he charged at officers with a knife “forcing officers to respond with their service weapons.” The man was shot and responding officers gave him first aid when the scene was safe until medics arrived, police said.</p> <p>The man was pronounced dead at the scene. No officers were injured.</p> <p>Nine officers were involved in the shooting are now on administrative leave, which is standard protocol. The shooting is being investigated by the Valley Independent Investigation Team.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/05 Venezuela largest marijuana bust in decade
SOURCE	https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/venezuela-armed-forces-make-largest-pot-bust-decade-89377052
GIST	<p>TIRAYA, Venezuela -- The armed forces of Venezuela announced Monday what they characterized as the largest marijuana bust of the last 10 years in the South American country.</p> <p>Members of the armed forces on Saturday intercepted a vessel carrying more than 3.1 US tons (2.8 metric tons) of marijuana, almost 18 pounds (8 kg) of cocaine and extra outboard boat motors off Venezuela’s Caribbean coast, said Gen. Domingo Hernández, general commander of the Operational Strategic Command of the Bolivarian National Armed Forces. He added that the vessel had departed Colombia and was en route to the island of Martinique.</p>

	<p>Twelve men traveling on the boat were arrested. Hernández said all are Venezuelans and were working for the Colombia-based Cartel of the Guajira.</p> <p>Nearly 6,293 pounds (2,857 kilos) of marijuana were seized from the boat, which lacked identification and had seven extra motors as well as 33 large storage containers with fuel and a satellite phone.</p> <p>The arrests and seizure were part of special operations of the armed forces across Venezuela's border. Soldiers in the area have also seized makeshift buildings that store fuel for airplanes used by drug traffickers who land in nearby illegal runways.</p> <p>"Since 2012, we saw, this is the most important stash of marijuana, and also, since 2012, we have disabled 305 airplanes, 27 (of them) this year with a lot of intelligence and prevention against micro trafficking and macro trafficking because this is another exponential sum as well," Hernández said.</p> <p>Hernández and his team on Monday showed reporters the drugs, fuel tanks and boat at a beachside campsite in the community of Tiraya set up for the area's special operation. Two large helicopters, military vehicles, tents and dozens of armed soldiers were also at the site.</p> <p>Hernández said more that 40.2 US tons (36.5 metric tons) of illegal drugs have been seized so far this year in Venezuela. That's up 29.2% compared to the same period last year.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/05 Canada manhunt stabbing suspect on run
SOURCE	https://abcnews.go.com/US/10-killed-15-injured-stabbings-saskatchewan-canada-police/story?id=89327140
GIST	<p>A suspect in the Canada stabbing massacre that left 10 people dead and 18 injured has been found dead, Royal Canadian Mounted Police Saskatchewan forensic officials said at a news conference on Monday.</p> <p>Damien Sanderson's body was discovered in a heavily grassed area near a house that officials were examining.</p> <p>Officials haven't confirmed his cause of death, but his injuries don't appear to be self-inflicted, Assistant Commissioner Rhonda Blackmore, the commanding officer of Saskatchewan RCMP, said.</p> <p>Miles Sanderson, Damien Sanderson's brother, may be injured and may seek medical attention but is still on the run, according to RCMP officials. He is still considered armed and dangerous.</p> <p>A massive search for the suspects was underway on Monday, as they remained on the run for a second day. They were accused of carrying out the attack in an Indigenous community in Saskatchewan, authorities said.</p> <p>On Sunday, RCMP Saskatchewan identified Damien Sanderson and Myles Sanderson as the two suspects in the massacre. They were believed to be driving a black Nissan Rogue with SK license plate 119 MPI, according to police.</p> <p>"Let me be clear, we are still looking for the two suspects. We are asking residents across Saskatchewan and our neighboring provinces to be vigilant. At this stage in our investigation, we believe some of the victims have been targeted by the suspects and others have been attacked randomly," Assistant Commissioner Rhonda Blackmore, the commanding officer of Saskatchewan RCMP, said in a statement issued late Sunday night.</p> <p>The Sandersons, whose relationship to each other was not immediately disclosed, are considered armed and dangerous, and Blackmore advised anyone who spots them to call police immediately and refrain from approaching them.</p>

Chief Evan Bray of the Regina Police Service, in Saskatchewan, issued a video statement on Twitter Monday morning, saying that "despite ongoing, relentless efforts through the night," the suspects remained at large.

"We've got a fresh set of investigators and shifts coming in today that will take over this investigation," Bray said.

He asked that anyone with information on the whereabouts of the suspects contact police immediately.

"We are confident that someone out there knows the whereabouts of these two and has information that would be valuable to the police, and I urge you to get in touch with your local police service to let us know," Bray said. "There's a lot of grief, there's a lot of anxiety in our province and in our communities this morning and all day yesterday, and really I think an important step for families and communities working through this will be to bring these two safely into custody."

The stabbings occurred between James Smith Cree Nation and in the village of Weldon, located northeast of Saskatoon, police said.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police Saskatchewan said in a statement Monday that both suspects have been charged in the episode and that arrest warrants have been issued. Myles Sanderson is charged with three counts of first-degree murder, one count of attempted murder and one count count of breaking and entering into a residence, officials said. Damien Sanderson is charged with one count of first degree murder, one count of attempted murder and one count of breaking and entering into a residence.

More charges are expected to be filed against the suspects, the agency said.

The number of injured victims increased from 15 to 18, Blackmore said in a statement Monday.

Blackmore said investigators believe the suspects are still in the Regina area, but did not elaborate.

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HEADLINE	09/04 Norfolk Virginia shooting: 2 dead, 5 injured
SOURCE	https://www.upi.com/Top_News/US/2022/09/04/off-campus-house-party-shooting-leaves-2-dead-5-injured-norfolk-virginia/2321662316332/
GIST	<p>Sept. 4 (UPI) -- A late-night mass shooting near two university campuses in Norfolk, Va. left at least two people dead and five others injured, police said Sunday.</p> <p>Zabre Miller, 25, and Angelia McKnight, 19, died from their injuries at a local hospital after shots rang out around midnight in the 5000 block of Killam Avenue, officials with the Norfolk Police Department said in a statement.</p> <p>Police officers who responded to the scene found three other women and two other men with gunshot wounds who were also transferred to a local hospital.</p> <p>A suspect was not identified by police and it was not immediately clear what led to the shooting.</p> <p>The administration at Norfolk State University, about 4 miles away, said in a statement that several of its students were victims of the shooting.</p> <p>"Initial indications are that our students were innocent bystanders of a shooting at an evening house party," the statement from NSU reads.</p> <p>"The investigation is pending and additional details will be made available upon receipt. In the meantime, the campus community is asked to keep the injured and their families in our thoughts and prayers."</p>

	<p>The university said that campus police secured the area and that "there is no present danger."</p> <p>NSU will be offering counseling services to students.</p> <p>The shooting happened just blocks from Old Dominion University, which sent out an alert to students telling them to stay away from the area at 12:46 a.m.</p> <p>Old Dominion officials told WAVY that no students were injured.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/04 Teens taken against will; boarding schools
SOURCE	https://www.arcamax.com/currentnews/newsheadlines/s-2721076?fs
GIST	<p>KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Julio Sandoval tells parents he wants to help their wayward sons get on the right path.</p> <p>He assures them, through the website for his transport business, that he will deliver their children safely to a boarding school. So parents hire Sandoval's company — Safe Sound Secure Youth Ministries — to remove their so-called "troubled teens" from their homes and transport them to the schools.</p> <p>Sandoval also is former dean of students at Agape Boarding School and current leader of another unlicensed facility, both in Missouri. His goal with his transport company is to be "a blessing to your home," and Sandoval shares with parents the philosophy he says he uses with his own seven children: "I don't care if you like me, I am not raising you for YOU to like ME. I am raising YOU, for ME to like you."</p> <p>Now, Sandoval, 41, awaits his next court appearance, arrested last week after a federal grand jury indicted him for violating a restraining order — issued at the request of a minor boy against his mother — by transporting him against his will to Agape in southwest Missouri. The jury also indicted the estranged mom of the teen, who was dropped off at Agape last summer after a 27-hour drive from California, the indictment says, his hands cuffed behind his back the entire way.</p> <p>The arrests underscore concerns many have with transport companies whose agents often show up at homes in the middle of the night — with the parents' consent — dragging scared youth out of bed, sometimes restraining them with handcuffs and threatening physical force if they don't comply. They then cart them off to boarding schools across the country, including Missouri.</p> <p>"That's literally kidnapping," said Rep. Keri Ingle, D-Lee's Summit, who initiated hearings in Jefferson City on boarding schools and co-sponsored legislation that now regulates them. "I would be incredibly traumatized by being taken from my home in the middle of the night and handcuffed and threatened and all of that and then jetted states away.</p> <p>"That's absolutely crazy. That's the stuff of movies. It's unbelievable."</p> <p>Yet it's been going on in Missouri and throughout the nation for decades, causing what students describe as extreme trauma that stays with them into adulthood.</p> <p>"You've got the dean of students that's running a transport service," Aimee Groves, a former student at two unlicensed girls' boarding schools in Missouri, told The Kansas City Star last year. "These people are paid to kidnap children and traumatize them."</p> <p>Sandoval pleaded not guilty Wednesday in California federal court via video conference and was released on a personal recognizance bond. His next court date is scheduled for Oct. 5.</p> <p>Agape issued a statement through its attorney, John Schultz, regarding Sandoval's indictment.</p>

“Agape does not own, control or operate any transport service, nor does Agape sponsor or endorse any transport service,” it said. “Agape was unaware of the California protective order but as soon as Agape learned of it discussions were had with the boy’s father to have him picked up from Agape. The boy was at Agape for 7 days and then turned over to his father when he arrived.”

Sandoval was Agape’s dean of students when he incorporated his transport company in June 2020 as a nonprofit with a Stockton, Missouri, address, state corporation documents show. Agape is located in Stockton.

On Jan. 12, Sandoval registered his company under a slightly different name — Safe Sound Secure Transport Agency — using the address of Lighthouse Christian Academy. That boarding school is in Piedmont, a town of about 1,900 in the remote Ozark foothills of southeast Missouri. Sandoval left Agape last fall and took a job as an officer at Lighthouse.

Sandoval’s company has employed two off-duty Cedar County Sheriff’s deputies to help pick up the youth from across the country. One of those deputies, Robert Graves, has worked at Agape and is the son-in-law of its late founder, James Clemensen.

Horror stories about transports surfaced several times last year in testimony that former students submitted to Missouri lawmakers as they considered measures to give the state some oversight over unlicensed boarding schools. Students represented several schools, not just in the Show-Me State.

“When I was 13 years old I was picked up out of my bed in the middle of the night by strangers who threatened me with mechanical restraints if I resisted,” Hannah Kay wrote in her February 2021 testimony. “I didn’t know why or where I was going. My parents were instructed to ignore my pleas for help.”

The California girl, then weighing just 65 pounds, was whisked away to the Florida Panhandle. She told The Star, “I honestly thought I had gotten involved with terrorists, and that’s why this was happening.”

Parents can pay hundreds and up to thousands of dollars to have their children picked up by transport companies and delivered to boarding schools.

Ingle said several former students shared with her their transport company stories and how the experiences still affect them today. She questions the legality of such methods.

“That opens things up to trafficking, false imprisonment, kidnapping, all of those things,” Ingle said. “It’s horrifying. And if these are kids with alleged behavioral problems or histories of trauma, this is just going to exacerbate that.”

Taken in the middle of the night

Niles Short was asleep in his Chicago-area bedroom in October 1999 when two men woke him up around 2 a.m.

Unbeknownst to him, his mom had secretly packed his things.

“These guys came in my room in plain clothes,” Short told The Star. “They handcuffed me with real handcuffs and threatened me with a Taser. I got into survivor mode, told them I had to (go to the bathroom). They made me leave the door open and watched me.”

Soon, he was in a car and on his way to Stockton, Missouri. Short doesn’t know who the men worked for, but it wasn’t Sandoval’s company because he was transported about 10 years before Sandoval started at Agape.

“I was cornered in my bedroom — it was a shocking thing,” Short said. “I remember that day like yesterday. ... My sister had warned me about it but I didn’t believe her, because Mom always threatened me with boarding school.”

Student after student recounted similar scenes in vivid detail. Middle of the night. Scared. Unsure of where they were going. Not knowing when they would be able to come home again.

During an investigation into Missouri’s unlicensed Christian boarding schools, The Star interviewed more than 70 former Agape students. At least a dozen said the transport itself left them traumatized and unable to trust people.

Five former students of boarding schools — Agape and other locations — submitted testimony to Missouri legislators that detailed their experience with transport companies.

David Patterson ended up at Agape on Father’s Day 2002.

“I was police escorted there by off duty cops,” he said in written testimony to the House Children and Families Committee last year. “Waking me up at 4:30 in the morning telling me ‘we can do this the easy way or the hard way’ while showing me a pair of handcuffs.

“They picked out my clothes and made me wear a belt backwards in case they needed to handcuff me to myself, and made me wear a ‘transport boot,’ a shoe you would get if you had a broken foot and a cast to walk in.”

The boot, he said, would keep him from running away.

“Upon arriving in Agape I was strip searched naked in a room full of grown men I’d never seen before and then I was taken to get my head shaved,” he said. “I would be restrained multiple times for not conforming and submitting to the school’s strange and oftentimes peculiar interpretations of the Bible.”

Four years later, on the day after Christmas, Colton Schrag was sent to Agape for a second time from his parents’ home in New Mexico. He was 14.

“Two dudes woke me up at like 4 in the morning,” he told The Star, “zip-tied me and escorted me out ... like I was a hardened criminal.”

And Gabe Miller arrived from St. Louis, after a drive with two men from a transport company who entered the 15-year-old’s bedroom at 6 a.m on Labor Day in 2017. He quickly discovered that his grandparents had already packed his bag.

“They pulled out handcuffs and handcuffed me with my hands behind my back,” Miller told The Star. “They said, ‘If you act up, we can shackle your legs.’ I didn’t even get to say goodbye to my grandparents.”

One state takes a stand

One northwestern state decided that something had to be done.

Oregon lawmakers passed a bill that went into effect earlier this year to strictly regulate transport companies. It was the first state to adopt such legislation.

Its law requires companies that provide secure transport services for the purpose of placing a child in a residential program to be licensed as a “Child Caring Agency” in the state.

The companies also must comply with all the requirements of such an agency. That includes being incorporated and obeying the state’s restraint and seclusion policies. All prone, supine and mechanical

restraints — including hoods, blindfolds and handcuffs — are prohibited. So is the “infliction of pain” and ridiculing of youth.

“The transport experience is so shocking and horrifying because it’s associated with home, your safe place,” said Oregon state Sen. Sara Gelser Blouin, a Democrat who sponsored the legislation. “And so your ability to trust, like, ‘Who do I trust? How do I know that I’m safe? I can’t be safe at home. The people that are supposed to protect me are watching this happen to me.’ You can’t get over that.

“It’s trauma on so many levels.”

What Sandoval’s company is accused of doing — handcuffing the Fresno teen and driving him to Agape — “would 100 percent be illegal in Oregon for a whole bunch of reasons,” Gelser Blouin said.

“I think what’s interesting about that case, though, is the way that these places make their activities legal,” she said. “The contracts that the parents sign with the company give them the right to basically abuse their children. What made this illegal with this kid — and that’s what is frustrating — is it wasn’t really the transport, it was the restraining order.”

The mom didn’t have the authority to delegate the transport, Gelser Blouin said.

But she argues that the transport itself is wrong.

“You’re taking kids and you’re moving them involuntarily across state lines for profit,” she said. “What happened to that kid was and should be illegal. It is assault, and it is abuse, and it is imprisonment. But what’s absurd is that the only reason it was a crime was because his mom signed the papers.”

If his dad had signed transport papers, Gelser Blouin said, the exact same thing would have happened to the boy, and it wouldn’t have been a crime.

As for Agape, Gelser Blouin said she’s familiar with the school and allegations of abuse.

“I don’t know that there’s anybody that hasn’t heard about Agape,” she said. “I believe that it is a national embarrassment to the state of Missouri. There is no reason that it should be open. It is a demonstration of corrupt politics and clearly shows a disregard for the well-being of children. The evidence couldn’t be more clear.”

While working on her bill, Gelser Blouin spoke extensively to former boarding school students, including Brett Harper, an Oregon resident who attended Agape from 1999 to 2003. Last year, Harper told the Oregon Senate Committee on Human Services, Mental Health and Recovery — which Gelser Blouin chairs — about his experience being transported to the southwest Missouri boarding school.

He explained how one day his adoptive dad drove him home. His dad had just gotten off work at a parole and probation office in Oregon.

“We got inside and all of a sudden two men came out of the bathroom and showed me these badges,” Harper said. “They said they were here to take me to a boarding school and that I could go the easy way or the hard way. They informed me they were hired by my dad.”

The men told Harper that they typically didn’t allow parents to be present during the pickup but because “my dad is in law enforcement, they felt it would be OK,” Harper told the committee.

At the time, Harper said he chose the “easy way” and “allowed them to cuff me and put me in the van with my dad.”

He said his dad apologized and told him that he was going to a boarding school “that would help me get my attitude right and get right with God.”

“The transport itself, although not overly violent, is traumatic enough where I still have night terrors to this day at age 35 and this was 21 years ago,” Harper testified. “Most people who are transported to residential treatment facilities, boarding schools, wilderness camps ... have night terrors, and some for the rest of their lives.

“I’ve spoken with survivors that have had night terrors about being transported 30 years later.”

Temira Lital, a mental health professional who was taken to a boarding school by transporters when she was a teen, also testified in support of the legislation.

“We’re talking about the act known as teen transport,” Lital said. “It’s not transport. It’s licensed kidnapping. I say that as a therapist and as a survivor.”

“Imagine being torn from your own bed, mostly naked, by strangers of the opposite sex. For many years, I slept with my bed in front of my door. I slept with a knife under my pillow. I slept in my clothes, ready to run and live on the streets rather than suffer through this again. Teen transport almost destroyed my life.

“By banning it, you can protect the children of Oregon from similar experiences.”

In the end, Gelser Blouin said she hopes other states do what Oregon did and pass meaningful legislation to regulate transport companies and stop the “abuse” that youth endure.

“I think it should be illegal, period,” Gelser Blouin said. “I don’t see any world in which this is appropriate. We would not do that to adults.”

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HEADLINE	09/05 Justice for Mexico’s 43 missing students?
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/sep/05/mexico-43-missing-students-ayotzinapa-report
GIST	<p>When Clemente Rodríguez imagines seeing his only son Christian again, he envisions an encounter on a Mexican beach, or a chance meeting on the streets of his home village. Maybe his son will have a beard; after eight years, he’s bound to have changed.</p> <p>“I tell my wife that when I see him, I’ll have heartache from sheer joy,” says Rodríguez. “When he comes home, I imagine us going to the beach – Acapulco or Cancún – just for fun.”</p> <p>Christian was last seen alive in September 2014, when he and other student teachers from the Ayotzinapa rural teachers’ college in southern Mexico commandeered a fleet of buses to take them to a demonstration in the capital.</p> <p>Hours later, the 43 students were ambushed and abducted by local police working alongside a local cartel called Guerreros Unidos. Most of them vanished entirely, in one of the most notorious and baffling atrocities in Mexico’s blood-soaked recent history.</p> <p>Scores of suspects, including local politicians, government officials and cartel thugs have been detained. Arrest warrants have been issued for dozens more, but there have been no convictions, and the fate of the students remains unknown.</p> <p>The case – and the authorities’ muddled response – became a millstone for the then president, Enrique Peña Nieto, and an emblem of the crisis of impunity in Mexico, where more than 100,000 people have gone missing at the hands of criminals and corrupt officials.</p> <p>In late August, however, faint hopes were raised that there might finally be some answers.</p>

A government truth commission appointed by President [Andrés Manuel López Obrador](#) released a 108-page report which concluded that [the mass disappearance was a state-sponsored crime](#) involving federal and state authorities at the highest levels of government.

Alejandro Encinas, the deputy interior minister who had chaired the commission, also made the startling revelation that six of the students were [kept alive for several days after their abduction](#) before being put to death on the orders of a Mexican army colonel.

Days after the report's publication, federal agents arrested [former attorney general Jesús Murillo Karam](#) – who oversaw the original investigation – on charges of forced disappearance, torture and official misconduct.

Murillo Karam has long been accused of imposing a politically convenient narrative on the investigation – in which the students were supposedly mistaken for members of a rival group – in order to quickly close the case.

Arrest warrants were also issued for 83 others, including soldiers, police officers, Guerrero officials and gang members.

The developments offered some hope that the case may finally be solved – but by pointing the finger at high-level military officers and officials from the previous government, it also represents a challenge for López Obrador.

“If the government says it's going to go after guilty officials, then it must keep its word,” said Rodríguez.

The president, popularly known as Amlo, promised to “reach the truth” in the case. But he was quick to say that Peña Nieto was not himself under investigation, and added that any future decisions over the case would be up to the magistrates leading the investigation.

His comments have failed to dampen accusations that once again, politics has been prioritized over justice. “Just as [politics helped shut down the case in 2014](#), politics is shutting it down again in 2022,” said the author and journalist Ricardo Raphael.

“It's hard to conclude that Murillo Karam came up with this official version on his own. The story was produced in Los Pinos [the former presidential residence] – not in the prosecutor's office.”

Investigators now appear to be focusing on the theory that – unknown to the students – one of the commandeered buses was carrying a hidden shipment of heroin, which had been allowed to pass police and cartel checkpoints – and which the corrupt police officers were dispatched to recover.

But for relatives of the missing students, the priority remains simple: finding out what happened to their loved ones.

Last week the families called on the truth commission to allow independent experts from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights to examine its evidence.

“We need undeniable scientific evidence of the whereabouts of our sons. We can't go home with just preliminary findings which do not reveal where they are – and what happened to them,” the families said in a statement.

“We've taken one step, and that's important. But what we want is for the law to be followed: we want justice, and we want to know the truth of what happened to our sons,” said Cristina Ascencio, mother of another missing student, Benjamín Ascencio Bautista.

One possible step towards that truth would be the arrest of Peña's close ally Tomás Zerón, the former director of the attorney general's criminal investigation agency (AIC). Zerón was forced to resign

after [video emerged](#) of him torturing suspects in the case of the 43 students, and [he was accused of tampering with evidence](#).

He was then named as Peña Nieto's security adviser, but fled to Israel to escape charges of kidnapping, torturing suspects, manipulating evidence and embezzling about \$50m of public funds. Zerón denies the allegations.

"If Zéron is captured, the trail to Los Pinos will become clear. The investigators will have to follow it, and it will be hard to avoid looking into the role of Peña Nieto and his circle," said Raphael.

[Mexico has repeatedly called on Israel to hand over Zerón](#), despite the lack of an extradition treaty between the two countries, and last week, the foreign minister, Marcelo Ebrard, said that he could be returned to Mexico within days.

In his state of the nation address on Thursday, Amlo mentioned Ayotzinapa and again pledged that there would be no impunity for the perpetrators.

But any arrests must be supported by evidence that will stand up in court, warned Raphael, adding that justice will only be achieved when those responsible for the atrocity are tried and convicted. "The day that there are convictions for [forced] disappearance, murder and covering up the truth – that day will be a victory against impunity."

Until that day comes, relatives of the missing students will continue fighting, said Rodríguez. "This whole time has been an emotional and psychological hell," he said.

In 2020, government investigators told Rodríguez that DNA from a fragment of bone found at the dump in Cocula matched that of his son.

But despite that finding – and the conclusion of the truth commission that there is no evidence to suggest the students are alive – Rodríguez refuses to let go of hope.

"Until I see a body, my son is still alive," he said. "My struggle isn't over. My son was whole when they took him, and if they say he's no longer alive, then they should catch whoever was responsible – and return me his body."

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HEADLINE	09/03 'Missing' teen arrested in murder probe
SOURCE	https://www.king5.com/article/news/crime/olympia-teen-missing-arrested-murder-investigation/281-591b609f-5a5f-4950-8ba9-e21f3dc20d97
GIST	<p>PIERCE COUNTY, Wash. — The Olympia teen who went missing under "suspicious circumstances" earlier this week has been arrested in a murder investigation, according to the Pierce County Sheriff's Department (PCSD).</p> <p>Gabriel Davies, 16, was arrested Friday night in the investigation of second-degree murder, first-degree burglary and first-degree unlawful possession of a firearm. Another teen was also arrested and faces the same charges.</p> <p>Typically, KING 5 does not name juveniles who are arrested but is confirming this connection because of recent coverage of the community search and in consideration of the gravity of the crime.</p> <p>Deputies responded to the 21900 block of 190th Street E in Orting on Thursday to check on a 51-year-old man who had not shown up for work in several days, sheriff's department officials said.</p> <p>"We found he had a gunshot wound but did not find a firearm, so immediately that was suspicious," said Sgt. Darren Moss.</p>

PCSD said evidence found at the scene linked two 16-year-old males to the man's death, but did not specify what that evidence was.

"Our detectives did a lot of work finding evidence at the scene as well as talking to other people and just developing good probable cause to find a connection between the suspects and the victim and ultimately they were able to get all the evidence they needed by Friday afternoon to make these arrests," Sgt. Moss said.

Pierce County prosecutors will determine if charges will be filed. Both teens were booked into Remann Hall Juvenile Detention Center on Friday night.

Sgt. Moss said state law prohibits officers from interviewing juvenile suspects until receiving permission from an attorney, so deputies have not yet heard from the teens what their motives may be.

"Trying to figure out why these kids did this, we don't get to sit them down and talk to them," Sgt. Moss said. "The law makes it so the juveniles have to have the attorney present before we can do the interviews."

Earlier this week, Davies was the center of a search operation after his truck was found abandoned with small amounts of blood near Tenino off Tilley Road. Thurston County Sheriff's Office (TCSO) investigators also found items "strewn" about in his truck and his cell phone "shattered" nearby.

TCSO said witnesses reported seeing Davies walking alone along Tilley Road near Millersylvania State Park.

Davies was reportedly found "safe" Thursday night near Tilley Road and Maytown Road, according to TCSO.

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HEADLINE	09/04 Moving trucks stolen; includes 18 firearms
SOURCE	https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/2-trucks-personal-items-firearms-stolen-military-couple-moving-to-dc/281-5044926e-c77d-4ed1-9e17-48a41d2f0517
GIST	<p>FIFE, Wash. — "Nearly everything we own, everything we've acquired over 40 plus years of our lives is gone," said Jeremy Yama, from his new home in Virginia.</p> <p>Two U-Haul trucks full of personal items, furniture, family heirlooms and 18 personal firearms with 2 sets of body armor, were stolen during Yama and his wife's move from Washington state in July.</p> <p>Yama said their entire home was loaded into two U-hauls and then driver and crew left and parked the trucks at the Guesthouse Inn in Fife. Yama said the trucks were not secured and then they were stolen that night on July 27.</p> <p>At first, Yama and his wife said they felt uncomfortable being told the items would be loaded then unloaded into a bigger trailer.</p> <p>"My wife was pretty uncomfortable from the start, because they showed up with two U-Hauls, which we had never experienced. She immediately posted on Facebook that she thought we were about to get robbed," Yama said.</p> <p>Yama said he was assured nothing was out of the ordinary. Their home had limited access for a large moving trailer. He said he was told that was the best way to get their items moved.</p> <p>The very next day, a Fife Police officer called Yama to say the driver reported the two trucks stolen.</p>

"I started feeling empty for a moment in but that quickly turned to anger, I think naturally," Yama said.

Everything they had was gone.

"All of our belongings, our furniture, our clothes, baby pictures, belongings of our child who's now grown. Everything I've acquired from the military, over 21 years of service, and even some mementos we kept from our son who died at birth," Yama said.

Yama said if he could have one stolen item back, it would be the footprints belonging to his late son.

"I don't think it's a real expectation that a whole lot of stuff is going to be recovered at this at this point. But if there was one thing I would definitely say that."

They have recovered some items after the first truck was found through social media. Yama and his wife did their own investigative work, too.

"Most of the contents were stolen or destroyed. And similarly, the second truck was found by the Puyallup Police department, we went down the middle of the night, with them secured that truck, recovered whatever we could," Yama said.

Now that they have moved to Virginia, they are hoping for a conclusion soon. Yama says one of his firearms was located in a stolen car.

"Given the size of the theft, it was in our entire house, and also due to the 18 personally owned firearms and body armor, 18 firearms is not insignificant, but it feels like it's being treated like any other property crime. We'd also like to contribute to raising awareness on how widespread the crime in the area and around these encampments is getting. We were aware of it, but until we directly it directly affected us and we saw it in person, we didn't really understand the gravity of it," Yama said.

Fife Police tell KING 5 they are actively investigating. They did not give a suspect description. Yama is hopeful someone can help bring their items home.

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HEADLINE	09/04 Canada: stabbings kill 10, wound 15
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/canadian-police-issue-alert-after-apparent-random-stabbings/
GIST	<p>REGINA, Saskatchewan (AP) — A series of stabbings at an Indigenous community and at another town nearby in Saskatchewan left 10 people dead and 15 wounded, Canadian police said Sunday as they searched across the expansive province for two suspects.</p> <p>The stabbings took place in multiple locations on the James Smith Cree Nation and in the village of Weldon, northeast of Saskatoon, police said.</p> <p>Rhonda Blackmore, the Assistant Commissioner of the RCMP in Saskatchewan, said some of the victims appear to have been targeted by the suspects but others appear to have been attacked at random. She couldn't provide a motive.</p> <p>"It is horrific what has occurred in our province today," Blackmore said, adding there were 13 crime scenes where either deceased or injured people were found.</p> <p>It is among the deadliest mass killings in Canadian history. The deadliest gun rampage in Canadian history happened in 2020 when a man disguised as a police officer shot people in their homes and set fires across the province of Nova Scotia, killing 22 people. A man used a van to kill 10 pedestrians in Toronto in 2019. But mass killings are less common in Canada than in the United States.</p> <p>Blackmore said police began receiving reports before 6 a.m. of stabbings on the First Nation community. More reports of attacks quickly followed and by midday police issued a warning that a vehicle reportedly</p>

carrying the two suspects had been spotted in Regina, about 335 kilometers (208 miles) south of the communities where the stabbings occurred.

Police said the last information they had from the public was that the suspects were sighted there around lunchtime. There have been no sightings since.

Regina Police Evan Bray said late Sunday they still believe the suspects are in the city of Regina and urged residents to follow alerts and provide information if they have.

"If in the Regina area, take precautions & consider sheltering in place. Do not leave a secure location. DO NOT APPROACH suspicious persons. Do not pick up hitch hikers. Report suspicious persons, emergencies or info to 9-1-1. Do not disclose police locations," the RCMP said in a message on Twitter.

The suspects were identified as Damien Sanderson, 31, and Myles Sanderson, 30. Saskatchewan Crime Stoppers issued a wanted list last May that included Myles, writing that he was "unlawfully at large."

Doreen Lees, an 89-year grandmother from Weldon, said she and her daughter thought they saw one of the suspects when a car came barreling down her street early in the morning as her daughter was having coffee on her deck. Lees said a man approached them and said he was hurt and needed help.

But Lees said the man took off and ran after her daughter said she would call for help.

"He wouldn't show his face. He had a big jacket over his face. We asked his name and he kind of mumbled his name twice and we still couldn't get it," she said. "He said his face was injured so bad he couldn't show it."

She said the man was by himself and "kind of a little wobbly."

"I followed him a little ways to see if he was going to be OK. My daughter said 'Don't follow him, get back here.'"

Weldon residents have identified one of the victims as Wes Petterson. Ruby Works said the 77-year-old widower was like an uncle to her.

"I collapsed and hit the ground. I've known him since I was just a little girl," she said, describing the moment she heard the news. She said he loved his cats, was proud of his homemade Saskatoon berry jam and frequently helped out his neighbors.

"He didn't do anything. He didn't deserve this. He was a good, kind hearted man," said Works.

She said the event has shaken a community where the sounds of sirens are rarely heard.

"No one in this town is ever going to sleep again. They're going to be terrified to open their door," she said

Weldon resident Robert Rush also described the victim as a gentle, widowed man in his 70s.

"He wouldn't hurt a fly," he said.

Rush said Petterson's adult grandson was in the basement at the time and phoned police.

At the Weldon Christian Tabernacle Church the congregation began their regular Sunday service by saying a special prayer to the victims and their families.

At the James Smith Cree Nation, a convenience store that also serves as a gas station became a gathering place for community members, who greeted each other with tears and hugs.

A sign on the door said: “Due to safety concerns with our community we will remain closed until further notice.”

The elected leaders of the three communities that make up the James Smith Cree Nation, including the Chakastaypasin Band and the Peter Chapman Band, declared a local state of emergency on Sunday.

Chakastaypasin Chief Calvin Sanderson said he’d left his phone off on Sunday morning and only learned of the tragic events when community members came to his door to check on him. He is not related to the two suspects.

Everyone’s been affected, he said.

“They were our relatives, friends. Mostly we’re all related here, so it’s pretty hard,” Sanderson said. “It’s pretty horrific.”

The emergency declaration, which was released by the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations, said two emergency operations centers have been set up.

“This is the destruction we face when harmful illegal drugs invade our communities, and we demand all authorities to take direction from the Chiefs and Councils and their membership to create safer and healthier communities for our people,” said Chief Bobby Cameron of the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations.

The search for suspects was carried out as fans descended on Regina for a sold out annual Labor Day game between the Canadian Football League’s Saskatchewan Roughriders and Winnipeg Blue Bombers.

The Regina Police Service said in a news release that with the help of Mounties, it was working on several fronts to locate and arrest the suspects and had “deployed additional resources for public safety throughout the city, including the football game at Mosaic Stadium.”

The alert first issued by Melfort, Saskatchewan RCMP about 7 a.m. was extended hours later to cover Manitoba and Alberta, as the two suspects remained at large.

The Saskatchewan Health Authority said multiple patients were being treated at several sites.

“A call for additional staff was issued to respond to the influx of casualties,” authority spokeswoman Anne Linemann said in an email.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said in a statement he was “shocked and devastated by the horrific attacks.”

“As Canadians, we mourn with everyone affected by this tragic violence, and with the people of Saskatchewan,” Trudeau said.

Deadly mass stabbings are more rare than mass shootings but have happened around the world. In 2014, 29 people were slashed and stabbed to death at a train station in China’s southwestern city of Kunming. In 2016, a mass stabbing at a facility for the mentally disabled in Sagami-hara, Japan, left 19 people dead. A year later, three men killed eight people in a vehicle and stabbing attack at London Bridge.

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HEADLINE	09/03 Shady ships exploit GPS to evade law
SOURCE	https://dnyuz.com/2022/09/03/high-seas-deception-how-shady-ships-use-gps-to-evade-international-law/
GIST	The scrappy oil tanker waited to load fuel at a dilapidated jetty projecting from a giant Venezuelan refinery on a December morning. A string of abandoned ships listed in the surrounding turquoise Caribbean waters, a testament to the country’s decay after years of economic hardships and U.S. sanctions.

Yet, on computer screens, the ship — called Reliable — appeared nearly 300 nautical miles away, drifting innocuously off the coast of St. Lucia in the Caribbean. According to Reliable's satellite location transmissions, the ship had not been to Venezuela in at least a decade.

Shipping data researchers have identified hundreds of cases like Reliable, where a ship has transmitted fake location coordinates in order to carry out murky and even illegal business operations and circumvent international laws and sanctions.

The digital mirage — enabled by a spreading technology — could transform how goods are moved around the world, with profound implications for the enforcement of international law, organized crime and global trade.

Tampering this way with satellite location trackers carried by large ships is illegal under international law, and until recently, most fleets are believed to have largely followed the rules.

But over the past year, Windward, a large maritime data company that provides research to the United Nations, has uncovered more than 500 cases of ships manipulating their satellite navigation systems to hide their locations. The vessels carry out the deception by adopting a technology that until recently was confined to the world's most advanced navies. The technology, in essence, replicates the effect of a VPN cellphone app, making a ship appear to be in one place, while physically being elsewhere.

Its use has included Chinese fishing fleets hiding operations in protected waters off South America, tankers concealing stops in Iranian oil ports, and container ships obfuscating journeys in the Middle East. A U.S. intelligence official, who discussed confidential government assessments on the condition of anonymity, said the deception tactic had already been used for weapons and drug smuggling.

After originally discovering the deception near countries under sanction, Windward has since seen it spread as far as Australia and Antarctica.

"It's a new way for ships to transmit a completely different identity," said Matan Peled, a founder of Windward. "Things have unfolded at just an amazing and frightening speed."

Under a United Nations [maritime resolution](#) signed by nearly 200 nations in 2015, all large ships must carry and operate satellite transponders, known as automatic identification systems, or AIS, which transmit a ship's identification and navigational positional data. The resolution's signatories, which include practically all seafaring nations, are obligated under the U.N. rules to enforce these guidelines within their jurisdictions.

The spread of AIS manipulation shows how easy it has become to subvert its underlying technology — the Global Positioning System, or GPS — which is used in everything from cellphones to power grids, said Dana Goward, a former senior U.S. Coast Guard official and the president of Resilient Navigation and Timing Foundation, a Virginia-based GPS policy group.

"This shows just how vulnerable the system is," he said.

Mr. Goward said that until now, all major global economy players had a stake in upholding an order built on satellite navigation systems.

But rising tensions between the West, Russia and China could be changing that. "We could be moving toward a point of inflection," Mr. Goward said.

Analysts and Western security officials say the U.S. and European Union sanctions on Russian energy imports as a result of the war in Ukraine could drive Russia's trade underground in coming months, obscuring shipments of even permitted goods in and out of the country. A large shadow economy risks escalating maritime deception and interference to unprecedented levels.

U.S. intelligence officials confirmed that the spread of AIS manipulation is a growing national security problem, and a common technique among sanctioned countries. But China has also emerged in recent years as a source of some of the most [sophisticated examples](#) of AIS manipulation, officials said, and the country goes to great lengths to conceal the illegal activities of its large fishing industry.

Windward is one of the main companies that provide shipping industry data to international organizations, governments and financial institutions — including the United Nations, U.S. government agencies and banks like HSBC, Société Générale and Danske Bank. At least one client, the U.N. Security Council body that monitors North Korea's sanctions compliance, has used Windward's [data to identify ships](#) that breach international laws.

The Israeli company's research offers a glimpse into the inner workings of the usually opaque and loosely regulated shipping industry.

Dror Salzman, Windward's product manager, first spotted a civilian ship transmitting a fake voyage early last year, in Venezuela. A tanker called Berlina had been transmitting a strange drifting pattern for several weeks just outside the South American country's waters.

The idle movements did not make sense — keeping such a vessel at sea costs tens of thousands of dollars each day. Berlina's movement also defied basic physics, he said. The ship, at one point, turned its 270-meter body 180 degrees in only a few minutes; its perfectly straight drift defied the effects of the tide and the Earth's rotation.

These anomalies could not be blamed on a technological glitch. Because AIS transmissions are compiled by multiple sources — including nearby ships, satellites and onshore stations — experts say they tend to track a large vessel's movements nearly perfectly, especially in busy shipping areas like the Caribbean.

In fact, Berlina was nowhere near its purported location at that time. It was loading oil in the eastern Venezuelan port of José, according to Vortexa, another shipping data company that identified the ship through port sightings, and shared its findings with Windward.

The United States is the only country that bans dealings with Venezuela's state oil company, meaning that Berlina's oil transfer was not illegal in Venezuela or Cyprus, where the ship is registered. But because of Washington's outsized role in global finance, many ships try to hide their presence in Venezuela to avoid being ostracized by banks, insurance companies and customers.

After learning to spot fake ship movements, Windward researchers realized the technology was proliferating at lightning speed. "What seemed to be a localized practice at first has soon spread to nearly all known maritime regions," the company said in a report late last year.

The spread of the deception tactic could be mitigated by the United Nations' adopting stricter security protocols for the software that is installed in the AIS transponders by commercial manufacturers, maritime officials and satellite data experts said.

The technology to fake satellite signals, either from the ship itself or from a remote location, has existed for decades, but was previously confined to military use, according to Windward. In the past two years, however, military grade AIS transponders, or at least the software that replicates its effects, appear to have become available for sale on the black market, spreading rapidly among dealers of sanctioned and illicit goods.

The war in Ukraine is likely to accelerate its adoption. After the invasion began in February, the U.S. Department of Transportation's Maritime Administration [reported an increase](#) in cases of AIS manipulation and jamming in the Black Sea, coinciding with U.S. and Ukrainian claims that Russia was trying to hide its oil exports and [smuggle stolen Ukrainian grain](#).

The Department of Transportation referred questions to the United States Coast Guard, which confirmed an increase in reported cases of AIS manipulation.

U.S. officials declined to say how they would react to the spread of the deceptive technique, for fear of exposing intelligence-gathering operations, but in the past, the U.S. Treasury Department has banned ships from doing business with American entities, or even confiscated their cargo, for violating sanctions.

In the future, the technology could also become available to airplanes, which use a similar satellite transponder to AIS, with potentially significant implications for terrorism, smuggling and people's ability to cross national borders undetected, said Windward's Mr. Peled.

"It's not a matter of if, but when," he said.

Attempts by ships to hide their tracks are as old as seafaring. Pariah states like North Korea, weapons runners and Iranian oil traders have for decades tried dodging detection by constantly changing ships' registrations, painting fake ship names on hulls and assuming identities of different vessels.

After satellite navigations systems became dominant in the 2000s, those seeking to avoid detection adapted by turning their trackers off while carrying out illicit activity, a practice known as "going dark."

But the tactic had shortcomings. Ships with dark activity spells are shunned by banks and insurance companies and scrutinized by regulators.

The proliferation of AIS manipulation has once again tipped the scales in the deceivers' favor by allowing them to carry out illicit business while maintaining a veneer of respectability, said Mr. Salzman of Windward. By transmitting a fake location, a ship can claim deniability.

The technology behind this deception tactic is also becoming increasingly sophisticated. The impossible movement patterns that Mr. Salzman noted last year are being replaced by transmissions of coordinates stolen from other ships, replicating real voyages.

The result has been the expansion of illegal activity to the mainstream sectors of the shipping industry.

About 40 percent of all AIS manipulation cases identified by Windward were carried out by ships registered in countries with at least some ability to enforce international laws. For example, Reliable and Berlina, the tankers shipping Venezuelan oil, both manipulated AIS while being registered in Cyprus, a member of the European Union that markets itself as "Europe's largest ship management center."

Overall, Windward says its analysis of AIS transmissions has identified 18 Cyprus ships that have manipulated their location coordinates. Separately, Lloyd's List Intelligence, another shipping data company, has found that [many of the same ships](#) have recently started trading Venezuelan oil that is under U.S. sanctions.

The spread of AIS manipulation by E.U.-registered vessels shows how advances in technology allow some shipowners to earn windfall profits from commodities under sanction while benefiting from European financial services and legal safeguards.

Cyprus's deputy shipping minister, Vassilios Demetriades, said illegal manipulation of on-ship equipment is punishable by fines or criminal penalties under the island's laws. But he has downplayed the problem, saying AIS's "value and trustworthiness as a location device is rather limited."

According to Cyprus's corporate documents, Reliable belongs to a company owned by Christos Georgantzoglou, 81, a Greek businessman. The ship crossed the Atlantic for the first time shortly after Mr. Georgantzoglou's company bought it last year, and has transmitted locations around eastern Caribbean Islands since, according to Windward's analysis.

	<p>But Venezuela's state oil company records reviewed by The New York Times show that Reliable was working for the Venezuelan government in the country during that time.</p> <p>Mr. Georgantzoglou and his company did not respond to repeated requests for comment.</p> <p>Their Venezuelan dealings appear to contradict a promise made by Greece's powerful shipowners association in 2020 to stop transporting the country's oil. The association did not respond to requests for comment.</p> <p>Meanwhile, Reliable is still moving fuel around Venezuelan ports or loading crude onto Asia-bound ships in open waters to hide its origin, according to two Venezuelan oil businessmen, who asked not to be named for security reasons. It still broadcasts coordinates of a ship adrift in the Caribbean Sea.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/04 CM3 movement: disrupting youth violence
SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2022/09/04/us/credible-messenger-mentoring-movement/index.html
GIST	<p>(CNN)Wearing the signature black and gold colors of the Latin Kings street gang he once led, Antonio Fernandez recently walked through the Maria Hernandez Park in the majority-Hispanic neighborhood of Bushwick, Brooklyn.</p> <p>It is here that Fernandez, formerly known as King Tone, held gatherings for hundreds of his fellow gang members in the 1990s. On a sweltering July day, Fernandez returned to the park with a new goal: to seek out young men and divert them from the path he once travelled.</p> <p>"This was the place where I practiced how to become a better leader," said the 56-year-old Fernandez, a third generation Puerto Rican, who led the Latin Kings in New York from 1995 to 1998. Fernandez was sentenced in 1999 to 13-and-a-half years in prison after pleading guilty to conspiring to sell narcotics but served nine-and-a-half years, including three years in solitary confinement.</p> <p>Fernandez approached strangers with ease, part of what he calls "mapping." The goal, he says, is to identify young people in need of direction. He was also looking for natural leaders, adults who have the potential to mentor and youth who are experiencing challenges they once faced -- poverty, violence and drug addiction.</p> <p>As US cities struggle to reign in the sustained rise in gun violence since the onset of the coronavirus pandemic, some officials are turning to a burgeoning intervention program known as the Credible Messenger Mentoring Movement (CM3). Fernandez is the lead national trainer for CM3, which is expanding youth mentorship and rehabilitative programs in communities across the nation most impacted by violent crime.</p> <p>CM3 partners with government agencies and community groups, providing them with a model to recruit, train and deploy "credible messengers" so they can have a transformative impact on youth in the criminal justice system or at risk of incarceration. Clinton Lacey, who founded CM3 in Washington, DC, in 2021, defines credible messengers as natural leaders rooted in the communities they serve. They become "credible" by drawing on their shared life experiences in the justice system and in their communities to leverage trust and build relationships with young people and families.</p> <p>"We are demonstrating that if you invest in the communities that have traditionally been seen as the source of the problem or pathology, that if you shift the focus from seeing them as negative actors who produce problems, it's clear that within those communities are people with expertise and solutions. That's what the credible messenger represents," said Lacey.</p> <p>Credible messengers, a term that traces back to Eddie Ellis, a former member of the Black Panther Party, have existed for decades in various forms. Ellis developed the concept while incarcerated in a New York state prison in the 1970s and 1980s for a murder he didn't commit. He recognized that people with insider</p>

knowledge of the criminal justice system can be powerful mentors, helping to heal trauma and address the root causes of violence.

Inspired by Ellis, Lacey says that CM3's objective is to transform systems and institutions that have "for so long acted in a racially disparate way towards Black and Brown people."

CM3 was born from the success of other credible messenger programs. [One of them is Arches](#), which Lacey helped to establish in 2012 during his time as deputy commissioner of the New York City's probation department. The city became the first to employ a mentoring program like Arches that connects high-risk young people on probation ages 16 to 24 to mentors with similar life experiences.

Arches proved to be highly effective in reducing recidivism rates among young people by teaching life skills, building trusting relationships and changing behavioral patterns.

In 2021, Lacey founded CM3 in Washington, DC. Central to the CM3 model is a 35-hour intensive training curriculum and a long-term commitment by credible messengers, who are expected to continue their relationships with youth and their families long after their mentees transition out of the justice system.

The training program incorporates research from both medical and mental health fields, teaching courses focused on the impact of trauma on adolescent brain development as well as crisis intervention and conflict resolution. One of the courses is titled "The Art of Science and Hope," which is informed by Arizona State University's Center for the Advanced Study and Practice of Hope. The institute is directed by Dr. Richard Miller, who has trained CM3 leadership on the importance of teaching hopefulness to children in encouraging them to plan for goals, future opportunities and life challenges.

Credible messengers reduce recidivism, study shows

"These kids were dealt a bad hand. A bad hand is also a system that is broken. A system that sets them up for failure," Fernandez told a group of a dozen credible messengers gathered for a four-hour training session in July in Jersey City.

Standing alongside Fernandez, Lacey told the group, "For a system that is historically broken, what's the alternative? We are the alternative."

Lacey says that the credible messenger approach can change the trajectory of at-risk youths and turn communities around. New York City officials seemingly agree, bringing in CM3 leadership to join Mayor Eric Adams' "Public Safety Transition Committee" to recommend safety actions he should take during his first 100 days in office. CM3 was also supported by Congressman Adriano Espaillat (D-NY) to receive \$530,000 in federal community project funding.

Over the past year, CM3 has expanded to Jackson, Mississippi, Houston, Seattle, Orlando, Florida, Jersey City, New Jersey, and Los Angeles. Its leaders are also working to implement their program in juvenile facilities in Los Angeles County, Alameda County and South Carolina's Department of Juvenile Justice, according to Lacey.

This growing interest in the program is a result of the proven success of Arches and the elements of that program that inspired the CM3 framework.

A [study conducted by the Urban Institute](#) between November 2015 and June 2017 found that Arches participants had a 69% lower felony reconviction rate within 12 months of starting probation. Within 24 months, the rate remained 57% lower than a group of young people who did not participate in the study.

The decision by New York City to become the first government agency to employ credible messengers under the Arches program is a recognition of "the national limitations that an agency like probation has in terms of reaching young people who distrust government and other entities," and those who have been

failed by other adults in their lives, said Ana Bermudez, commissioner of the New York City Probation Department, in an interview with CNN.

"This just gives us more opportunities to not lose young people to incarceration, to the streets and to be able to rechannel them and tap into their potential more effectively," Bermudez said.

Working with the system

As the lead national trainer for CM3, Fernandez has trained staff in probation departments, courts, detention centers and other agencies which have legal authority over the young people that CM3-trained credible messengers serve.

Fernandez manages a team of CM3-trained credible messengers within a juvenile rehabilitation facility called the New Beginnings Youth Development Center in Washington, D.C., which is run by the District of Columbia Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services (DYRS).

"I do my rounds at New Beginnings every week. I see my kids, I see my staff, I make sure that everybody is accountable and is doing what was instructed," Fernandez said.

Lacey became the director of DYRS in 2015 and helped to establish an initiative that included core features of Arches but expanded mentoring services to the families of youth as well. Like Arches, it was another program that inspired the creation of CM3.

CM3's trained credible messengers at New Beginnings participate in group counseling sessions with youth and therapists and attend staff meetings that review juvenile cases and track their progress. They work closely with facility officers, administrators and mental health staff to share insights on each case, offer solutions for a child's rehabilitation, and participate in meetings to discuss whether a child is ready to return home.

CM3's trained credible messengers also work with youth who are being court-supervised by probation officers as they navigate the justice process. This includes accompanying youth to court appearances, communicating with their probation or parole officer and ensuring they comply with court mandates.

Raequan McIver, 25, arrived at New Beginnings when he was 16 years old, after being charged with assault with a deadly weapon. McIver says he started acting out after he was diagnosed with learning disabilities in elementary school. His first arrest took place when he was in 9th grade, and he soon began hanging out with older kids who introduced him to firearms, he says.

McIver, who is Muslim, said his mentor first taught him about his religion and would help him read the Quran, which made him feel more comfortable to open up about his family and the struggles he faced. "My mentor ... told me about his time in jail, the harsh experiences he had encountered while in there," McIver said. "He told me, 'I spent decades watching my kids grow up without me. The thing I loved the most, I had to leave. Is it worth it?'"

After McIver left New Beginnings when he was 18, his mentor helped him gain financial literacy, create his resume and prepare for interviews. When he was offered a job at a local hospital, McIver's mentor bought him clothes and transported him to work during his first two weeks until his first paycheck. Now, McIver is a credible messenger himself.

"I can say that credible messengers impacted my life and turned me around from being a menace to now being a mentor, a big brother and a father."

'I didn't have a broken home, I had a poor home'

Fernandez, who grew up in a Catholic family in East New York with four sisters, said he "didn't have a broken home, I had a poor home." His father worked over 12 hours every day, which allowed Fernandez to roam the streets. He says that freedom led him on a path to selling drugs at a young age.

	<p>Fernandez joined the Latin Kings gang when he was 19 years old while he was serving time in Rikers Island prison for drug possession. Members of the gang who were in prison with Fernandez taught him about his Puerto Rican heritage and how to read.</p> <p>"I found healing in the place where I had the most trauma of my life," he said. "It really confused me that I found healing in the jail and not in school, not in my own neighborhood."</p> <p>When Fernandez left prison in 1992, he says he was intent on reforming his fellow gang members. He wanted to engage them politically on issues important to Hispanic communities. While many of his gang members supported his mission, others resisted and decided to leave.</p> <p>Fernandez believes that if young people have support systems that relieve the oppression they face, their aggravation that leads to violence starts to diminish.</p> <p>"If he never felt understood or loved, now he knows it because you relieve him -- you give him mental health services, shelter and food," he said.</p> <p>While at Maria Hernandez Park, Fernandez walked up to a teenage boy who was doing pull-ups at the park gym. With a big smile on his face, Fernandez gave him his business card and encouraged him to reach out if he "ever needs anything."</p> <p>"You see, I'm comfortable talking with strangers," he said. "That's what I practice, being able to talk to kids and engage with them. That's where I'm comfortable the most. That's just my reality."</p>
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HEADLINE	09/04 Downtown Charleston shooting: 6 injured
SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2022/09/04/us/charleston-downtown-shooting/index.html
GIST	<p>(CNN)At least six people were injured following a shooting in downtown Charleston, South Carolina, early Sunday, police said.</p> <p>Officers responded to the area of King Street and Morris Street around 12:55 a.m. due to gunshots, the Charleston Police Department said in a news release.</p> <p>Multiple people were hit by gunfire and were taken to area hospitals, the release said.</p> <p>At least six people were injured, Charleston Police spokesperson Corey Taylor told CNN. The extent of their injuries were unknown.</p> <p>The shooting is under investigation, officials said.</p>
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HEADLINE	09/03 Street takeovers plague neighborhoods
SOURCE	https://www.cnn.com/2022/09/03/us/los-angeles-street-racing-elam/index.html
GIST	<p>Los Angeles (CNN)Bob's Market in Angeleno Heights may look like a regular Los Angeles convenience store, but it's an icon.</p> <p>In the Fast and Furious movie franchise, it was turned into Toretto's, the shop owned by the family of the character portrayed by Vin Diesel. Throughout the day, fans from all over the world stop to take pictures in front of the shop selling Fast and Furious paraphernalia beside the normal bevy of snacks and drinks.</p> <p>But those movies -- known for their fast cars and daring stunts -- have left a mark on this neighborhood in another way. Fans of the films flock here in their tricked-out cars to show off what they can do, leaving circular skid marks from doing donuts and "swinging" around the intersection in front of the shop.</p>

For the residents living here, it is more than a nuisance. They say the dangerous and illegal car antics happen at all hours of the day and night, endangering lives.

"They're coming around drifting, doing the donuts, spinning around like crazy with their mufflers sounding like explosions," said Bella, a longtime Angeleno Heights resident who did not want to give her last name, adding the smell and smoke from the burning tires lingers in the air, permeating their homes.

And it is not just the noise and sound pollution. The residents say reckless drivers are endangering their community.

"The risk of them hitting somebody ... that's the problem that we have is you're putting our lives at risk. You're putting our neighborhood at risk. They don't stop at the stop signs anymore," Bella said.

Judy Lyness has lived in Angeleno Heights for more than 20 years and remembers when no one wanted to come there. But now, "you hear these screeches ... and it happens until the cops come," she said.

Police investigate street takeovers nationwide

Dangerous "street takeovers," as they are known, are happening all over the country. In just the last week, an entire block in Des Moines was damaged by out-of-control cars; police in Salt Lake City arrested six people for illegal drag racing; in Chandler, Arizona, police say an illegal drag race left one driver dead; and near Chicago, a pedestrian was struck and killed in a crosswalk during what police believe was a street race. Another led to the destruction of police vehicles.

Chicago alderman Byron Sigcho-Lopez said higher fines and impounding vehicles is having little impact on deterring street racing, telling [CNN affiliate WBBM](#), "These incidents are not stopping. They haven't stopped. If anything, they've gotten worse and worse."

In Compton, California, mid-intersection rumble strips have done little to slow down the takeovers. In videos, cars can be seen rolling right over them.

Southern California has a joint [Street Racing Task Force](#) between the Los Angeles Police Department, the LA County Sheriff's Department and the California Highway Patrol. It boasts targeted crackdowns including vehicle impoundments, citations and gun seizures. It also promotes a weekly event allowing racers to drive on a drag strip and "burn rubber in the burnout box," but it hasn't slowed down the takeover of public streets.

"We're getting a lot of violent crime with these takeover groups. It develops a mob mentality," said LAPD Sgt. Jesse Garcia, an officer in charge of the task force. "We're getting looting at stores, we have shootings ... all directly tied to these takeovers."

The problem exploded during the pandemic, Garcia said, with 3,000 calls to police in 2019 skyrocketing to nearly 12,000 in 2021-- some people come from as far away as Texas just to join the takeovers, he added.

In Angeleno Heights, near the setting for the "Fast and the Furious" films, Garcia said they see a different issue: tourists appear to be the culprits. Garcia says burnouts, where drivers hold the brake and spin their tires to create smoke, tend to be more from individual cars, not the large-scale takeovers plaguing other parts of the city.

"We're doing direct patrols, and we're increasing them in frequency," he said. "The [Los Angeles] Department of Engineering is looking at that area to see what more can be done" to reconfigure the intersection.

'It's called vehicular manslaughter, but it was murder'

Some residents in Los Angeles have had enough, taking to the streets in protest last week, as filming was set to begin for the next movie in the franchise. One protester, Anna Marie Piersimoni, lost Larry Brooks,

her husband of more than 30 years, when he went out for some exercise in May 2020, and never came home.

"The driver revved his car to 90, spun out, lost control. He hit my husband and six other cars which thankfully were unoccupied and parked. My husband had 10 minutes to live after that," said Piersimoni, who added posted street signs put the speed limit there at 35 miles per hour. "It's called vehicular manslaughter, but it was murder."

Since it was classified as vehicular manslaughter, Piersimoni said the punishment for the driver was less severe than if he had been charged with murder. She said the driver, who was sentenced in April of this year, is already out of jail.

"He was there from early May until the middle of July," Piersimoni explained. "I think people will do less of this ... if they know that they're going to have much more serious consequences."

Reflecting on her husband, Piersimoni said Brooks, a psychotherapist, was an "amazing father" to their two children -- now both adults -- and possessed a "sweet, really gentle disposition." She now wears his wedding band on a necklace.

"I had a couple of medical adventures, and he was there for me every step of the way. Same when it happened to him. We took care of each other," Piersimoni recalled. "There's the old things -- a little photograph, a certain food that we might have enjoyed, you know, will make me choke up and cry -- but it's also the new things."

When Piersimoni sees footage of street racing, she gets angry.

"I feel furious. There's another meaning to that word in the movie, Fast and Furious," she said. "There's just no reason for it."

Even though she's moved across town since losing her husband, Piersimoni says she still hears street racing where she lives now. She and others are calling for a disclaimer to be added to the Fast and Furious films, convinced they glamorize street racing.

Universal Pictures did not respond to CNN's request for comment.

'I liked the rush, the adrenaline'

Hector Elizaolo said it was not a movie but peer pressure which drew him to street takeovers. His brothers turned him on to the burning rubber and the thrill of a wild ride.

"I liked the rush, the adrenaline," the 28-year-old told CNN. "The experience was cool."

It didn't last. As Elizaolo did donuts on a Covina, California street he had an audience: the police. Elizaolo was ticketed, and his car impounded.

"That day the police pulled me over I lost interest in it," he said. "I had to pay money to take my car out, I had to do community service and all this was a big waste of time."

As part of a court order, Elizaolo will take classes and meet with Lili Trujillo Puckett. He'll learn he is one of the lucky ones. No one died in his case, but Puckett will tell him about the daughter she lost in 2013 to a street race.

Families express anger

Puckett is sure reckless drivers cannot begin to understand what they've taken from the victims' families. "When you lose a child, time will never heal because it's something that you keep with you forever. You actually miss that person more. I miss her voice. I wonder what she would look like now at 25," Puckett said, remembering her daughter Valentina.

Puckett started the non-profit, Street Racing Kills, after her 16-year-old was killed in 2013 when a teen who was driving the car she was in crashed during a street race.

"Valentina -- she hit her head, and then she went through the window," explained Puckett, who mentors street racers who have been punished by the courts, telling them, "Your whole dreams and your life is going away ... and you're going to have the other party telling you this what you took away from us."

Seeking solutions

Bella, the Angeleno Heights resident, wants the city of Los Angeles to do more to stop the street takeovers, and she does think the production company bears some responsibility, even though she said she "loved" seeing the filming happening in her neighborhood over the years.

"I'm not entirely blaming them for it because they don't have control over what the fans do, but they can take some sort of accountability to perhaps do a PSA that stresses and says this is not safe," Bella argued. "When that film comes out and things get a little bit crazy ... we pay the price."

She said her young daughter is constantly terrified someone is going to get hurt based on what she sees -- and hears -- happening in the neighborhood.

"Can you imagine a small child abruptly woken up in the middle of the night to what sounded like an explosion right outside her window?" Bella said, describing a common occurrence in her home. "She's crying, she's screaming, and she is literally out of control, and we're trying to comfort her as you're shaking from the sound that you just heard outside."

After so many of the Fast and Furious movies, Bella hopes the production will consider moving on to other locations.

"This is so dangerous for the residents that live here, and we're left behind to pick up those pieces when the production ends," she said.

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HEADLINE	09/02 Seattle alarming rise homicides, violence
SOURCE	https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/seattle-police-continue-see-alarming-rise-homicides-gun-violence/IGPW7OIU3VFKXL3CYJL2STIQGE/
GIST	<p>SEATTLE — Seattle police continue to report an extreme rise in gun violence and homicides. According to Detective Valarie Carson, there were 11 reported homicides in the city. The Seattle Times states this is the most the city has seen in a month in almost 15 years.</p> <p>“The members of our community, I wanted to speak with you today about something that’s been keeping me up at night,” Interim Police Chief Adrian Diaz said.</p> <p>Chief Diaz gave a response to the grim stats on Facebook Friday afternoon and how this increase is impacting him and the department.</p> <p>“With four homicides in just five days, Seattle has reached a heartbreaking milestone,” Diaz said.</p> <p>Diaz says at least 25% of the homicides reported in 2022 have some link to homeless encampments across the city.</p> <p>And at the current rate, he thinks Seattle could set new records in reported shootings and homicides.</p> <p>“And it’s not just the homicides on the rise. Shootings are also up. So far in 2022, we’ve seen 513 shots fired compared to 391 at this time last year,” Diaz said.</p>

	<p>The numbers have also upset Mayor Bruce Harrell.</p> <p>“I’m not happy when I look at the number of murder and deaths we’ve had in the city,” Harrell said during a press conference Wednesday.</p> <p>The Office of Mayor Bruce Harrell sent KIRO 7 this statement in response to the SPD numbers:</p> <p>“This continued violence and crime is troubling and heartbreaking — the mayor believes that in One Seattle every person deserves to feel safe and to be safe. As far as public safety improvements go and sustainable solutions go, the City Council recently passed the mayor’s Comprehensive Recruitment and Retention Plan to retain and hire more officers, which is critical for improved response times and thorough investigations. As we prepare the mayor’s budget proposal, we are looking at a holistic approach to public safety investments that includes law enforcement, community based solutions, activation efforts, and environmental improvements. Issues created over years cannot be solved overnight, but we will continue to work with residents and businesses to develop a comprehensive approach and drive sustainable progress.”</p> <p>“But when I walk the streets of Seattle, we have so much work to do,” Harrell stated.</p> <p>The numbers also have people in the city concerned as well. Kyle Crawford says that for the most part, he feels pretty safe where he lives in town. But he isn’t thrilled to hear how the numbers continue to rise.</p> <p>“I feel fairly safe living in an area like this, but the idea of that it’s been a record is a very scary idea,” Crawford said.</p> <p>He hopes the city can come up with a plan to combat the violence soon.</p> <p>“I don’t know why we all can’t just get along a little bit more. Like there’s no reason for stuff like this,” Crawford said.</p>
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